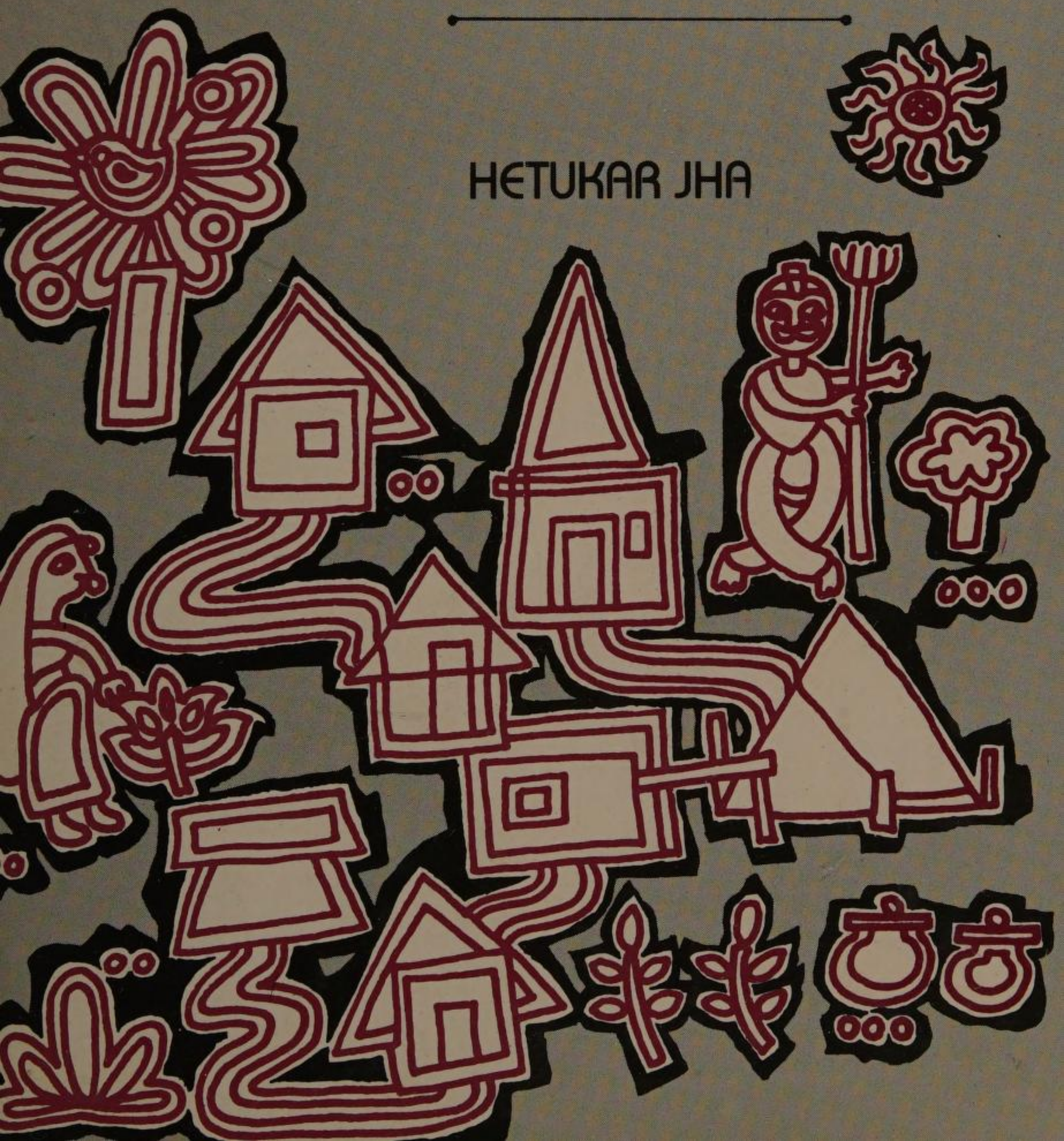
Social Structures of Indian Villages

A Study of Rural Bihar

HETUKAR JHA



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Society is a complex whole comprising of many and varied layers. Hence, understanding society can be problematic as perceptions often tend to be lopsided and incomplete. Perhaps the only way to avoid this trap is through a critical and interdisciplinary approach as presented in this pioneering book.

Prof. Hetukar Jha has chosen to analyse the forbiddingly complex society of rural Bihar. He bases his study not only on survey data but on historical records, particularly the 'village notes' which were prepared at the beginning of the century.

Prof. Jha started by classifying the villages of rural Bihar into eleven categories on a simple – complex continuum by analysing the records of more than 5,000 villages. This exercise paved the way for a systematic sampling of the villages studied and provided empirical grounds for the concept of a rural – urban continuum.

The author concentrates on the modal styles of relationships constituting the 'primary level structures' of villages. These structures are constituted by such institutions as family, sharecropping, moneylending, upper class and lower class relationships, and *jajmani* relationships. The expectations typifying the roles of each of these groups have been explored and analysed. Regional variations as well as variations in the nature of villages are significantly reflected in the styles of relationships studied.

An invaluable and informative study which uses ingenious sampling procedures and presents a fresh theoretical perspective drawn from role analysis, class analysis and phenomenology while presenting numerous pertinent features of the social structure of rural Bihar for the first time. The book will be of interest to anthropologists and sociologists as also those engaged in rural development.

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HETUKAR JHA

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To the memory of my mother, Mohini Devi, and
father, Baldeo Jha

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Preface

Society is a complex whole; its layers are many and its shades varied. Understanding society is problematic as its perception tends to be lopsided. However, a critical and interdisciplinary approach might help an investigator to avoid the risk of falling into the proverbial situation of the 'seven blind men and the elephant'. In the case of Bihar, where both the dimensions and degree of societal heterogeneity are forbiddingly complex, the need for an interdisciplinary approach to social science studies has been acutely felt. It was with this idea in mind that in 1975, four of us—namely, Dr J.B.P. Sinha, Professor and Head of the Psychology division, A.N.S. Institute of Social Studies, Dr Surendra Gopal, Professor of History, Patna University, Dr K.M. Tiwary, Professor of English, Patna University and myself—decided to meet and discuss the various issues concerning our society. We began to hold informal discussions from the points of view of our respective disciplines. Care, however, was taken to avoid discipline-specific jargon as far as possible in order to make the discussions understandable to all the participants. The plan worked and our discussion group, which later came to be known as the 'Friday Seminar Group,' continued (and still continues) its mission fairly regularly.

In the course of our seminar sessions, we realised that there was an acute paucity of data on the socio-economic relations in the rural sector (which encompasses the overwhelming majority of the population of the state). Our individual experiences of rural life

could not lead us far in critical evaluations. Under the circumstances, we decided to go in for fresh explorations in the field and acquire a first-hand view of the society. A proposal was then prepared to investigate the typified or modal patterns of relations among the different roles, institution-wise, constituting the village structure. The Indian Council of Social Science Research was approached to grant the necessary funds required for the study. I am grateful to the authorities of the I.C.S.S.R. who accepted the proposal and provided the financial support. This work is the result of this venture.

The study is based not only on data collected through survey research but also on historical records. Village records, particularly 'village notes' prepared in the beginning of this century in the course of the cadastral survey of Bihar, proved to be immensely valuable for classifying the villages into eleven categories on a simple-complex continuum. This helped in sampling the villages for study. The work is based on the postulate that considers the social structure of a village or community to be made up of the primary level structure and the secondary level structure. The primary level structure of a village community is constituted by such institutions as family, *mahajani* (money-lending), *bataidari* (sharecropping), and so on, which are taken as *given* by the members of the community. This covers the core of every day life in the village. This study has been directed towards understanding the modal styles of relationship in the primary level structure of the village community.

Needless to say, I have depended on my colleagues of the 'Friday Seminar Group' throughout the study for advice, clarification of concepts and discussion of perspective. I owe them my deep gratitude. However, they are not responsible for the errors, if any. Dr Ganga Nath Thakur, Dr Rajeshwar Mishra, Prabhat Kumar Jha, Indra Jit Singh and Bhuvaneshwar Sharma worked as field investigators. Clarence Louis typed the manuscript. My debt to all of them is great. I am thankful to the authorities of the Bihar Archives who granted access to the historical records preserved in the records' rooms of the different district headquarters. My thanks are due to Guneshwar Jha who spared valuable time as and when I required his help while preparing the report. I must

express my gratitude to all the people of the villages covered in this study without whose cooperation the project could not have been completed. Finally, I am also thankful to the members of the staff of the Department of Sociology, Patna University, for their co-operation.

HETUKAR JHA

ONE

Introduction and Perspective

Rural life in India has been the subject of observation, analysis and reflection in sociology and social anthropology for the last one-and-a-half centuries. In the nineteenth century, when the foundations of these disciplines were laid, a number of surveys of the rural regions were undertaken by British officials since they considered the knowledge of the subject people and their culture indispensable for their governance (Srinivas and Panini, 1986, p. 19). Thomas Munro was the first to formulate the concept of 'village community' in 1806,[1] which has since come to be recognised as the unit of Indian rural social structure. However, from Metcalfe to Maine its meaning varied a great deal (Dumont, 1966, p. 67). Dumont distinguishes three meanings (*viz*., the village as a 'little republic,' 'a body of co-owners of the soil' and an 'emblem of traditional economy and polity') in three successive historical phases beginning from the first quarter of the nineteenth century (*ibid*.). In the second half of the last century, understanding the village community was considered significant not only for administrative reasons but also for historical insights and ideas. Credit, however, goes to Henry Maine and Karl Marx for drawing 'the Indian village community into the circle of world history' (*ibid*., p. 80).

In the present century, 'Gandhi, along with bringing politics to

[1] This has been pointed out by L.B. Alayev in *Selskaya Obshchina Indii*, see Surendra Gopal (1987), pp. 17–23.

masses in the 1920s, inspired a number of social scientists . . . to undertake village studies . . . . These studies were not specialized in nature but comprehensive' (R. Mukherjee, 1977, p. 59). 'Village studies' continued to dominate the study of rural society in India until the early 1960s (Oommen, 1985, p. 117). The village was considered as the unit of investigation and the findings thereof were assumed to be valid for the whole of India (R. Mukherjee, 1977, p. 60). 'The dominant concern' of these studies, however, was 'to understand the nature of social structure' (Oommen, 1985, p. 119).

Later, rural studies underwent a shift in orientation which is marked by a critical evaluation of the status of 'village' in Indian society and tradition. In this context, Dumont and Pocock contended:

> A field-worker takes a village as a convenient centre for his investigation and all too easily comes to confer upon that village a kind of sociological reality which, in fact, it does not possess . . . . the village as an architectural and demographic fact is secondary to the social facts of kinship (Dumont and Pocock, 1957a, p. 26).

The village was, thus, considered by them as a secondary factor whereas kinship and caste were held to be the primary factors for understanding Indian social reality (Dumont and Pocock, 1957b, p. 18). This issue was hotly controverted chiefly by Bailey, who accused the former of distorting the understanding of Indian reality by denying the 'village' its due (Bailey, 1959, p. 92). S.C. Dube also supported this argument and stressed the significance of the 'village' as 'a culture-bearing unit' (Dube, 1958, p. 3).

However, it was in the same period that Ramkrishna Mukherjee demonstrated, by examining the dynamics of rural society historically, that the village 'remained as the most important . . . institution of Indian society until its basis began to be altered from about the fourteenth century . . . and until it was finally destroyed in the early years of British rule' (R. Mukherjee, 1957a, p. 71). Mukherjee further examined the status of the 'village' as a unit and/or variable though, according to him, it had already lost its 'community system'. In other words:

> The uniqueness of the villages in the social organization is substantiated insofar as they represent mutually distinct characteristics with respect to the phenomenon or phenomena

under examination . . . . *But it is well known that in many respects and in several vital respects at that, the social organizations of the people cut across the village boundaries; for the bulk of the people in the society at any rate. Such as, in the economic and political organization of the society, in the religious and caste bonds of the people, in their kinship integration, etc. From this aspect, therefore, the usefulness of village studies has been lost to the general run of social scientists* (R. Mukherjee, 1960, pp. 1–2, emphasis added).

Mukherjee, it seems, stresses the inappropriateness of considering the village as a *unit* of investigation more than Dumont and Pocock. Such a critical approach to 'village studies' probably had great appeal and multi-village studies began to be undertaken from the early 1960s (Chauhan, 1974, p. 101). The interest of policy makers, planners and social engineers also played a significant role in making multi-village studies popular among social scientists, which then came to be known as rural surveys (Oommen, 1985, pp. 119–20). These surveys (mostly sponsored by and initiated at the instance of different government bodies and institutes in the country) 'have two common features: raw empiricism and practical utility' (*ibid.*, p. 120). Rural surveys, thus, have been mainly concerned with generating benchmark data for planners and with the evaluation of the impact of developmental schemes launched by the government and other agencies in the rural sector. Besides, the concern for understanding the nature of social structure in the rural sector has also remained quite vigorous simultaneously. However, efforts made in this connection (understanding social structure) relate mainly to the economic and political aspects of society.

In this context, pleas in favour of a capitalist pattern as the leading tendency of the agrarian sector in India began to be advanced from 1962 onwards.[2] However, it is after 1967, when

[2] Alice Thorner writing about the debate on classes and modes of production in India considers Sulekh Chand Gupta, G.G. Kotovsky and Daniel Thorner as precursors. The former two made estimates of capitalist farming in India, but 'Neither of these estimates appears to have provoked any wide discussion. Quite the contrary was the case with the series of four articles published in the *Statesman* (Calcutta and Delhi) on four successive days in November 1967 by Daniel Thorner . . . . He concluded that the unprecedented wave of capitalist farming foreshadowed new social and political as well as economic development . . . . Thorner's positive, almost gleeful, description of the capitalist farmers disconcerted his left-wing Indian colleagues,' who then began to debate this issue. (See Alice Thorner, 1982, p. 1962).

Daniel Thorner published his articles in *The Statesman* highlighting the capitalist trend in the countryside, that social scientists began to ponder over this question by assigning it various labels (such as, capitalism, pre-capitalism, semi-feudalism, etc.) (*ibid.*, p. 1961). As regards the situation in eastern India (wherein lies the field of this study) in particular, the semi-feudal mode has been held to be characteristic of the agrarian scene by a number of scholars.

As early as 1957, Ramkrishna Mukherjee asserted:

> *The disintegration of the peasantry, however accelerated it was, did not . . . lead to a break away from the semi-feudal economy. Its basis* (namely, *the peasantry supplying the capital—self owned or borrowed—and labour for production, and the land-owning class thriving on the rents received from the land*) *remained intact and was further strengthened by heavier rents and higher interests from the 'crushed' peasantry* (R. Mukherjee, 1957a, pp. 53–56, emphasis added).

Thus, according to Mukherjee, the semi-feudal mode characterising rural Bengal has been primarily based on the exploitation of the peasantry by the landholders. Further, as this exploitation grew more and more intense, the semi-feudal economy was strengthened in this region in the course of British rule with the rise of the class of landed gentry (*viz.*, the landlords and supervisory farmers) and the class of sharecroppers and agricultural labourers with very little or no land of their own, followed by the disintegration of the class of self-sufficient and self-cultivating peasants having proprietory rights on land (*ibid.*, p. 41).

Amit Bhaduri conducted a survey in twenty-six villages of West Bengal in 1970 and found more or less the same trends that Ramkrishna Mukherjee had suggested on the basis of his historical study. Bhaduri took note of the following four prominent features of the semi-feudal set-up of the rural sector in West Bengal (A. Thorner, 1982, p. 1966): sharecropping; perpetual indebtedness of the small tenants; concentration of two modes of exploitation—usury and landownership—in the hands of the same economic class; and the lack of accessibility of the market for the small tenant. Bhaduri's thesis is supported by the findings of P.H. Prasad in the state of Bihar, which formed part of Bengal until 1912

(*ibid.*). Notable among others who supported Bhaduri in characterising the mode of agricultural production as semi-feudal are Nirmal Chandra and Ranjit Sau (*ibid.*, p. 1967).

Though the studies conducted so far in this context using the label of 'semi-feudalism' throw much light on social reality in eastern India, they do not reveal the patterns of social relationships characterising social structure. The focus of these studies is always on the exploitative aspects of production relations which, no doubt, constitute a significant portion of social reality but fail to incorporate relationships in various other institutions belonging to realms other than that of production. And, even in the sphere of production, the social relationships obtaining between the classes constituting the economic institutions (such as, sharecropping, *janouri*, etc.) are virtually ignored in such studies. Besides, the adoption of the label of 'semi-feudalism' to describe agricultural production relations during the colonial and post-independence days in eastern India (or in India as a whole) implies the existence of feudalism earlier, an issue already challenged by a number of historians and social scientists (see, for example, Byres and Mukhia, eds, 1985; Gopal *et al.*, 1974, pp. 441–44; D. Thorner, 1966, pp. 33–66). James Ray Hagen (1981, p. 202) explicitly says in this context that 'whatever the political or emotional satisfaction that attends the use of these terms'—namely, 'feudalism' and 'semi-feudalism'—'they do not help clarify our understanding of South Asian political economies'. Hagen, instead, opts for the '*raja-praja*' (king-subject) system as appropriate for understanding the political economy of the region during the colonial period (*ibid.*, p. 213).

Hagen describes this system as

> a kind of patron-client mode of regulating the flow of societal resources. The system's most complete form was in the agrarian domain . . . . The following features describe the system . . . . First, and most important, resource control was sought as a higher priority than profit . . . . Secondly, the system was geared to political self-sufficiency . . . . The point is that the *raja-praja* system operated fundamentally off itself; physical and moral control was enforced from within rather than dependent on a higher level of imperial authority . . . . The

raja-praja system operated through the three mechanisms of credit-bonding, religious sanction and the physical and symbolic authority delineators of cesses and force (Hagen, 1981, pp. 203–7).

The *raja-praja* system has, thus, been claimed to be more adequate than 'feudalism' or 'semi-feudalism' for explaining the Indian agrarian situation in general and that of Bihar (Patna district), in particular. However, the focus of attention in this approach is on the relationship of *control* operating between the patron group and the client group in society. Under the circumstances, other patterns of social relationship pertaining to different institutions of social structure remain practically beyond its domain. The *raja-praja* system as a theoretical frame of reference may be more broad-based than the approach of 'semi-feudalism,' but the frame as such cannot be stretched far enough to cover the socio-economic relationships other than those pertaining to the domain of social and economic control. This approach, thus, also affords only a circumscribed vision of social reality.

It seems to be, therefore, reasonable to hope that the study of the modal styles of relationship among the different institutions would enable one to understand social reality in a perspective that is based neither on control nor on exploitation. This study has been undertaken with this objective in mind. It is guided by the assumption that social transaction is not simply a one-sided movement of *control* by the patron-group, nor just *exploitation* by the privileged class.

Perspective

According to Abel (1970, p. 196), 'In sociology, the concept of *social* relations has been used in a broad as well as a narrow sense'. Wiese developed the 'broad' concept of social relationships. For him, 'Social life is viewed . . . as a constantly flowing stream of inter-human activity in an apparently impenetrable network of lines of association between men' (*ibid.*, p. 197). Abel remarks in this context that 'the connections established by these lines Wiese calls "social relations" and the entire network the "system of relations". These social relations are made up of what Wiese terms

"social processes". A social process is an occurrence that is a basic happening in the inter-human sphere, that is, in man-to-man relations' (*ibid.*). Social relations, therefore, as Wiese suggests, are constituted by the 'social process' at the interpersonal level. Social relationships thus constituted denote, according to Weber (1964, p. 118),

> the behaviour of a plurality of actors insofar as, in its manifest content, the action of each takes account of that of the others and is oriented in these terms. The social relationship thus *consists* entirely and exclusively in the existence of a *probability* that there will be, in some meaningfully understandable sense, a course of social action.

'The course of social action' between persons in which 'the action of each takes account of that of the others and is oriented in these terms,' gives rise to patterned interaction. Abel (1970, p. 199) contends that ' "social relations", in the narrower sense of the term, are durable patterned interactions between the two individuals'. Thus, conceptually, social relationships between persons or groups refer to the interactions between them in both the narrow and broad sense of the term.

Dewey and Bentley have proposed that interaction in social relations is a 'transaction' involving 'a complementarity of roles rather than of persons' (Abel, 1970, pp. 199–200). A role is always associated with a status and a person having a role by virtue of holding a position/status in a particular group or institution in the society has to confront a number of other role players. The roles associated with a single status constitute a role-set corresponding to that status (Merton, 1957, p. 42). An institution or association in the society is virtually an organic combination of certain identifiable role-sets and, therefore, investigation into the role performance of each role of each role-set might yield an understanding of the social relationships in that institution or association.

Dahrendorf has discussed this issue in a more elaborate manner. According to him (1970, pp. 24–25),

> Most modern sociologists have thought they could satisfy the need for an elementary analytical category by using as their basis either (with Leopold von Wiese) the concept of 'social

> relations,' or (with Max Weber) that of 'social action'. It is not difficult to see, however, that both of these concepts leave our problem unsolved. Speaking of 'social relations' or 'social action' is hardly less general than speaking of 'man' or 'society' . . . . It is no accident, therefore that the contemporary proponents of 'social relations' and 'social action' introduce in the course of their analyses, or even in their conceptual considerations, further categories that come nearer to being the elementary analytical units that sociology needs. Von Wiese and Parsons refer . . . to 'offices' or 'roles' as the individual's crystallised modes of participation in the social process.

Role, thus, reveals the substance of social relationship. The role of a person indicates *how* that person holding a particular status *relates* to other role-players in the role-set; this corresponds to the status held by that person because role represents society's demands on him as an incumbent of that role. Dahrendorf (1970, p. 37) suggests three features of social role:

1. Social roles are quasi-objective complexes of prescriptions for behaviour which are, in principle, independent of the individual.
2. Their particular content is defined and redefined not by any individual but by society.
3. The behaviour expectations with roles are binding on the individual, in the sense that he cannot ignore or reject them without harm to himself.

These features make it clear that behaviour expectations concerning a particular role are a social creation, binding on the role-player and, hence, objective. In other words, role expectations are 'modes of behaviour that are binding for the individual and whose binding character is institutionalised' (*ibid.*, p. 48).

However, there are some theorists (such as, Ralph Linton, Kingsley Davis, Hans H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills) who consider role not in terms of expected mode of behaviour but as actual behaviour (Dahrendorf, 1970, p. 61). However, George C. Homans, Talcott Parsons, John W. Bennett, Melvin M. Tumin and Robert Merton share Dahrendorf's view regarding role as an expected mode of behaviour rather than actual behaviour (*ibid.*,

p. 62). Dahrendorf (*ibid.*, p. 61) contends that according to the former approach, role loses its sociological relevance and becomes a variable of social psychology: 'How teacher Schmidt, in fact, behaves to his pupils or his superiors is by no means without social interest, but it tells us less about the fact of society than about Herr Schmidt's personality.' He, further, argues that

> People's regular behaviour towards other people gains sociological meaning only insofar as it may be understood as behaviour with respect to predetermined patterns that are assigned to the incumbent of a social position irrespective of his individual identity. It is these patterns and not . . . the behaviour itself, that we have called social roles (*ibid.*).

Thus, 'people's regular behaviour toward other people' refers to a pattern (that is, a role) which is predetermined and assigned to 'the incumbent of a social position irrespective of his individual identity'. In order to understand social relationships in a group, therefore, the roles constituting that group have to be investigated.

The field of this study is rural Bihar. Here, the village has been a basic, identifiable entity of social existence since ancient days. A village settlement is recognised as a cluster of *tolas* physically separate but 'functionally tied' (R. Mukherjee, 1960, p. 4). Village-level integration may appear to be strong or weak, but the fact that it exists cannot be denied. This integration is so apparent that it at once emphasises the fact of the village having a social structure[3] backed by centuries of societal existence. The structure of a village society or community (H. Jha *et al.*, 1985, p. 14) 'can be thought of as comprising two levels—one, primary and the other, secondary'. It has already been postulated in an earlier study of rural Bihar that the primary level structure of a village community includes all such institutions and groups as family, *bataidari*, caste-*panchayati*, *purohiti*, etc., which are taken as *given* by the members of the community

> because the operational limits of the roles and statuses related to such groups and institutions are generally very much crystallised due to the legitimacy conferred on them by tradition. The

[3] 'Structure' has been used in the sense of 'relatively stable interrelationships among its parts'. See Johnson, (1967, p. 48).

> secondary level structure, on the other hand, consists of those groups and organizations (formal or informal) which are formed for certain goals (*ibid.*, pp. 14–15).

The patterns of intra-group and inter-group relationships at the primary level structure are generally taken as given and therefore cooperation and conflict at this level tend to be habitual.

This postulation of primary level and secondary level structure is not arbitrary. Schutz talks of multiple realities (Hekman, 1983, p. 71) among which the one that presents itself as reality *par excellence* is the reality of everyday life (Berger and Luckmann, 1971, p. 35). Regarding this reality of everyday life, Berger and Luckmann say that

> 'its phenomena are prearranged in patterns that seem to be independent of my apprehension of them and that impose themselves upon the latter. The reality of everyday life appears already objectified, that is, constituted by an order of objects that have been designated *as* objects before my appearance on the scene . . . . The reality of everyday life is taken for granted *as* reality' (*ibid.*, pp. 35–38).

The 'primary level structure,' thus, constitutes the 'everyday life' of society. Similarly, Fernand Braudel, one of the foremost historians of the present century and the founder of the Annales school, contends that

> daily life, with those aspects of life that control us without our even being aware of them; habit or, better yet, routine—those thousands of acts that flower and reach fruition without anyone's having made a decision . . . . Countless inherited acts, accumulated pell-mell and repeated time after time . . . become habits that help us live, imprison us . . . . I attempted to capture all this under the . . . heading 'material life'. Of course, this is only one aspect of man's active life, for he is as profoundly innovative as he is enslaved by habit (1977, pp. 6–7).

It is clear from the foregoing that Braudel also supposes that man's life has many aspects, that is, he supports Schutz's idea of multiple realities. Further, his postulate of 'material life' is not different from that of 'everyday life' which belongs to the domain of the

construct of 'primary level structure'. However, as man is 'profoundly innovative' according to Braudel, his innovative impulse gives rise to groups and organisations which constitute the secondary level structure, discussed earlier.

In the present schema, following the multiple reality approach, society (particularly village society) has been conceived as having a social structure constituted by the primary level structure and the secondary level structure. In an earlier study (H. Jha *et al.*, 1985) conducted by the Friday Seminar Group[4] in the districts of Patna, Bhojpur and Vaishali, the focus was on the secondary level structure of village society. It was observed that the forces at work at the secondary level had been responsible for change or *status quo* in the primary level structure thereby causing change or *status quo* in the social structure (in totality) of the village.[5] An understanding of the primary level structure which constitutes the 'material life' of the society or social reality *par excellence* may, therefore, be considered to be a prerequisite for understanding the social structure (in totality). Hence, the focus on the primary level structure in this study.

As noted before. in order to understand social relationships, the network of roles which are expectations directed at the incumbents of statuses/positions by the society have to be investigated. These expectations have been categorised by Dahrendorf (1970, pp. 40–41) in terms of *must* expectations, *shall* expectations and *can* expectations (*ibid.*, p. 40). According to him, 'Must expectations are the hard core of any social role . . . their compulsory character is nearly absolute . . . the sanctions associated with them are almost exclusively negative'. Further, regarding *shall* expectations, he states that 'most social roles include certain *shall expectations*, which are scarcely less compulsory than must expectations. With shall expectations negative sanctions still prevail, although the man who complies with them punctiliously can be sure of the esteem of his fellow-men' (*ibid.*, pp. 40–41).

The third group of expectations, i.e. *can* expectations, in contrast

[4] Besides me, the members of the Friday Seminar Group are: Dr J.B.P. Sinha, Professor and Head of the Psychology Division, A.N.S. Institute of Social Studies, Patna, Dr Surendra Gopal, Professor of History, Patna University and Dr K.M. Tiwary, Professor of English, Patna University.

[5] The postulates of 'primary level structure' and 'secondary level structure' are not merely for descriptive purposes but for analysing and understanding change in the rural sector. See H. Jha *et al.*, 1985, p. 39.

to the above two, are supposed to carry mostly positive sanctions (*ibid.*, p. 51). It seems that the traditional role theory which advances the 'identity theorem' (Matthijssen, 1973, pp. 89–90) (that is, 'the view that a congruence exists between the [formal] role definition and the [subjective] role interpretation'), the 'integration theorem' (that is, 'the assumption that a congruence exists between the value orientations anchored in the role system and the need dispositions of all those concerned') and the 'conformity theorem' (that is, the view that 'congruence exists between the norms of the role partners and the behaviour control-mechanisms of the role system'), relates to the former two—i.e., *must* expectations and *shall* expectations.

The three dimensions of the possible degree of freedom within role behaviour, namely, 'the possibility of modifying role behaviour, the possibility of relativising the values underlying the system and the possibility of renouncing constituted norms' (*ibid.*, p. 90) (which form the basis of Habermas' objection to traditional role theory) relate mostly to the realm of *can* expectations. The above dimensions of the degree of freedom can hardly operate under normal circumstances in the spheres of *must* and *shall* expectations which are of a 'compulsory' nature (as suggested by Dahrendorf) and, therefore, in the words of Braudel noted in the foregoing, 'imprison us'. Such expectations are the objectified or typified expectations and characterise the roles in the primary level structure insofar as 'the operational limits of roles' at this level of structure 'are generally very much crystallised due to the legitimacy conferred on them by tradition', as noted before. The deterministic approach advanced by the traditional role theory through the theorems discussed above, thus, may not be supposed to be invalidated, at least in the sphere of typified or objectified (i.e., *must* and *shall* expectations).

In this study, I have explored modal (i.e., typical) behaviour patterns which, in accordance with the above-mentioned role theory, could be a manifestation of objectified or typified expectations in respect to the different roles of the role-sets of all those institutions which are supposed to constitute the primary level structure. This, I hope, may afford some help in arriving at a fairly comprehensive understanding of the social structure.

TWO

Method of Study

This study has been conducted in the rural plains of Bihar state. This state is almost a quadrilateral; it is bounded by Nepal in the north, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in the west, Orissa in the south and West Bengal in the east. From north to south it measures 605 kilometres and 483 kilometres from east to west, covering an area of 1,74,038 sq. kilometres (which is 5.71 per cent of the total area of the Indian union), (Singh and Kumar, 1970, p. 1). According to the 1981 census, 87.53 per cent of the total population is rural (Lal, 1982). These people live in 67,546 villages (Lal, 1985). The state is divided into two distinct parts of almost equal size—the Ganga plain or Bihar plain and the highlands of Chota Nagpur (Singh and Kumar, 1970, p. 10). This division is not only geographical but has a cultural basis as well. The Chota Nagpur belt has been identified for a long time as the home of various tribes (such as the Munda, Oraon, Santal and Birhor) of Bihar. The Ganga plain is predominantly inhabited by those who are not identified as 'tribals'. However, the plainsmen are not culturally and historically homogeneous. The Bihar plain, the field of this study, is divided into a number of cultural zones, of which the chief are the Maithili speaking zone of north-east Bihar, the Bhojpuri speaking zone of western Bihar and the Magahi speaking zone of central Bihar.

The identification of the above-mentioned culture areas is not done merely on a linguistic basis, though language constitutes an important criterion of social demarcation. The identities of these

regions have been nurtured by historical forces since ancient times. For example, Mithila (also known as Tirbhukti and Tirhut) has been recognised as a centre for intellectual excellence in brahmanic and Buddhist learning since the Vedic age (S.N. Singh, 1922, pp. 1–53). Besides, it enjoyed political autonomy either as an independent kingdom or under the suzerainty of the Hindu and Turko-Afghan rulers until it was annexed to the *suba* of Bihar in the sixteenth century (K.K. Datta, 1968, p. 23). This administrative annexation, however, did not result in the cultural assimilation of this region with the whole *suba*. Rather, its identity has always been asserted implicitly or explicitly by the Mithila School of *Dharmashastra*, the Mithila School of Astrology (both of which have been instrumental in regulating festivals, rituals and the calendar in day-to-day life) and the Mithila School of Logic that secured a reputed status in the tradition of classical Hindu or brahmanic learning over the centuries. The cultural elites, it seems, remained loyal to the above traditions and did not accept the administrative verdict of the sixteenth century of projecting pan-Bihar nationalism. This is also indicated by the fact that the historical accounts of this region prepared by the Maithili scholars in the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century do not ever deal with Bihar as an encompassing socio-cultural reality (H. Jha *et al.*, 1985, pp. 81–82). The region, therefore, can be easily recognised as a culturally autonomous zone in Bihar.

Similarly, the Magadh cultural zone (i.e., central Bihar which lies south of the Ganga) possesses a glorious tradition that can be traced from the ancient period. The Magadh empire was not only the first to emerge in India, but was also the largest one in size. It also became one of the most celebrated centres of Buddhism and Jainism (which preached against brahmanic orthodoxy in general) and it was from here that the former was spread to far off areas such as Sri Lanka and Java. Nalanda Mahavihara, one of the most famous ancient universities of the Indian subcontinent, was located here. Even during the medieval and modern periods, the region remained in the limelight from both the political and commercial points of view. It also became a centre of Sikhism from the late medieval period (H. Jha *et al.*, 1985, p. 58). All these factors, perhaps, conspired against the emergence of brahmanic orthodoxy in this region, which had its stronghold in Mithila. The non-upper castes generally followed those cults which placed them

at par with the upper castes from both the social and religious points of view (*ibid.*, p. 59). Besides, they have also remained for a long time at par with the latter in the sphere of land control in this region (*ibid.*). The Magadh belt, thus, displays a life-style which is different from that of north Bihar (especially the Maithili speaking zone).

The Bhojpuri speaking belt (particularly of south Bihar) is quite close to Magadh from the geographical point of view. Historically, too, Shahabad formed part of the kingdom of Ashoka and the Gupta empire (O'Malley, 1924, p. 22). Like Magadh, this region also did not ever have a dominant brahmanic orthodoxy (H. Jha *et al.*, 1985, p. 18). Rather, the area experienced, in the course of time, a sharp polarisation between the cluster of upper castes and that of the non-upper castes (*ibid.*, p. 24). Historical forces influenced society here in such a manner that 'violence has been a significant mark of the very style of life . . . for a long time' (*ibid.*, p. 22). The non-upper castes always asserted their dignity as and when the occasion demanded and it is only in the Bhojpuri belt (of south Bihar) that the supremacy of the upper castes has been most virulently challenged (*ibid.*, pp. 17–40). The Bhojpuri speaking people have, thus, been rightly observed to.be 'curiously different from the others' (O'Malley, 1924, pp. 50–51) in Bihar.

It is clear from the foregoing that the Bihar plain is virtually a federation of Maithili, Magahi and Bhojpuri speaking areas. Of these, only two—namely, the Maithili and Bhojpuri belt (south of Ganga)—were selected for this study. Due to the constraints of time and money, it was not possible to include all three. Hence, selection became necessary. As noted before, Magadh has been in close proximity with the Bhojpuri belt both geographically and culturally, whereas their difference with Mithila appears to be significant in terms of historical experience and cultural ethos. Further, of the former two, the Bhojpuri speaking belt (of south Bihar) seems to have been less close to Mithila than Magadh (O'Malley, 1924, p. 74). I, therefore, decided to conduct the study in the two most divergent societies (of the Mithila and Bhojpuri speaking belt of south Bihar) in order to get highly comparable views of the plains of rural Bihar on the issues under consideration. I also decided to select an area in each region which has been culturally and historically known to be the central or core area of that region, which might reflect the maximum possible divergence

from its counterpart in the other region. Thus, in Mithila, the Bhour *pargana* was selected and in the Bhojpuri speaking belt of south Bihar the Bhojpur *pargana* was chosen.[1]

In each of the *parganas* forming the sample, villages had to be selected for this study as 'the substantial usefulness of village in this regard is essentially operational' (R. Mukherjee, 1960, p. 5). It seems self-evident that 'By taking account of the rural people as distinguished from the town or city population, the villages are easily identifiable because of their territorial, administrative and revenue-purpose demarcation . . . . Therefore, from the operational point of view, they have a reasonable claim to be the focal points of rural studies' (*ibid.*). However, the selection of villages involved methodological considerations. According to Mukherjee, 'if the terms of social research are to examine the "social" relationships among the members of a society . . . we should consider the village as a *variable* in the field of societal variation' (*ibid.*, pp. 5–6). Since the aim of this study is to explore and examine the modal styles of social relationships in the rural sector, the variations among the villages had to be considered while selecting the sample of villages in each *pargana*. The variation among the villages, however, has been described on a number of bases by different scholars and observers of the rural scene since the last century.

It will not be out of place to mention here that 'villages in British India were often regarded as comprising an egalitarian society' (R. Mukherjee, 1957a, p. 1). For Hegel, the Asian social system was immutable as it was based on 'the formless plethora of self-sufficient villages, with a union of crafts and agriculture and collective tillage' (Anderson, 1979, p. 480). Marx further elaborated this notion and held that

> The simplicity of the organisation for production in these self-sufficing communities that constantly reproduce themselves in

[1] According to Ramanath Jha, a great scholar of Mithila's culture and history, the villages belonging to Bhour *paragana* have contributed to the cultural tradition of Mithila a great deal since long and, therefore, this *paragana* forms the core of this region (see Ramanath Jha, 1968, pp. 2–3). In the Bhojpuri speaking belt, Bhojpur *pargana* was selected on the basis of the opinion of Dr K.M. Tiwary, Professor of English, Patna University, and a well-known linguist belonging to the Bhojpuri speaking region. He favoured this *pargana* because it constituted culturally the central part of this region. Besides, as described by Buchanan, this *pargana* was also the seat of the Ujjainiya dynasty for long (Buchanan, 1934, pp. 361–63).

> the same form and, when accidentally destroyed, spring up again on the same spot and with the same name—this simplicity supplies the key to the secret of the unchangeableness of Asiatic societies (1971, Vol. 1, p. 338).

He called the Indian villages 'stereotyped primitive forms' and also 'family communities' (Thorner, 1966, p. 39). Engels also applied a similar label—'ancient Asiatic family communities'—in 1853 (*ibid.*). This characterisation of the village as a community—simple, isolated, self-sufficient and unchanging—projected an egalitarian image of the population residing in the rural sector. This also implied that the villages, both in content and form, were the same everywhere, that is, 'tiny agglomerations' homogeneous in nature (*ibid.*). Henry Maine, for whom India (Dumont, 1966, p. 85) was 'little other than the great repository of verifiable phenomena of ancient usage,' also accepted this stereotypical description; the original paradigm had been prepared by Munro as early as 1806 (*ibid.*, pp. 70–84). The reason behind the popularisation of such a stereotypical understanding of the villages in India lies, according to Daniel Thorner, in the intellectual climate of the late nineteenth century when 'The relationship, then recently discovered between Sanskrit and the Indo-Aryan languages, led to the theory that India was the ancestral home of all Indo-Aryan speaking peoples' (1966, p. 52). Thorner further contends in this context that 'simultaneously, it was widely held that Indian origins could be found for many aspects of European social history, forms of the family, kinship, the commune, etc. Sir Henry Maine, for example, wrote in 1861 that institutions long dead in Europe were still very much alive in India' (*ibid.*).

However, as revenue administration grew in size and function and as more and more information regarding village organisation was gathered, this stereotyped view of the village began to lose popularity. Maine himself changed his earlier version, in this context, and held that 'the Indian village communities prove on close inspection to be not simple but composite bodies, including a number of classes' (Dumont, 1966, p. 83). Social scientists have increasingly made attempts towards exploding the myth of equality among Indian *villagers*, (R. Mukherjee, 1957a, p. 2), though the task of invalidating the supposed equality among Indian *villages* has not received so much attention (Dube, 1965, p. 3). However,

it may be mentioned that the differences between villages have been taken note of by some scholars and administrators from time-to-time since the last century. These have been studied and analysed elsewhere in the context of categorisation of the villages in Bihar (Jha and Gopal, 1982, pp. 111–13). According to this study, large scale data bases were taken up for the first time by Ramkrishna Mukherjee and B.K. Roy-Burman for developing a classification schema in this context. The former conducted a survey of 439 villages falling within a 10-mile radius, with Giridih town in Bihar as the centre (*ibid.*, pp. 116–17). He adopted the following three criteria for purposes of classification: distance of the village from the town Giridih; distance from the nearest bus route to the town; and number of households. Two important domains—the village-town nexus and intra-village household strength—were the important societal factors for the classification of villages. Roy-Burman analysed the census data on villages and adopted two criteria, *viz.*, the level and extent of literacy and the extent of participation in economic activities for formulating the following five categories: primitive, archaic peasant, feudalistic, capitalistic, and welfare economy oriented (*ibid.*, p. 119). The variations in the above critieria have not been precisely defined by Roy-Burman and, therefore, it may prove to be difficult for anyone to identify villages in terms of the categories suggested (*ibid.*). Besides, this scheme of classification is chiefly based on economic criteria. The factor of literacy, though incorporated in this schema, cannot account for the entire social domain.

The attempts made so far in this context, are important, no doubt, but they do not reveal the simple-complex continuum of categories of villages based on inter-village and intra-village sociological factors. Modal styles of social relationship are expected to vary not only with the variations of culture from Bhojpur to Mithila, but also with variations in the nature of a village on the simple-complex continuum. It was, therefore, decided to categorise the villages of Bihar plain in terms of a simple-complex continuum based on inter-village and intra-village sociological factors.

In order to tackle this task, it was considered desirable to proceed inductively. This proved to be quite problematic as the data regarding villages on a large scale are available only in the census records, which do not contain caste-wise details. In the exercise on classification of villages based on census data, one of the most

relevant sociological factors, namely, caste, would remain un-incorporated. The categorisation thus formulated would by all means be unrealistic. Under the circumstances, it was decided to consult the 'village notes,' which were prepared at the beginning of this century by the then Survey and Settlement authorities in the course of the first cadastral survey of this state.

These notes were prepared on the basis of a schedule containing the following fifteen items, besides those concerning the identity of the village such as the name of the village, its revenue number, name of the *pargana*, name of the thana and name of the district[2]: 1. (blank); 2. physical description; 3a. irrigation and embankment; 3b. supply of drinking water; 4. general crop and agricultural notes; 5. village history; 6. rents and government revenue; 7. *kists* for payment of rents; 8. cesses and *abwabs*, if any; 9. rights of tenants; 10. markets and communication; 11. *sairat*; 12. trees (customs as to); 13. village officials and service tenure-holders; 14. village measures and weights; 15. general notes (regarding population, caste, occupation, village customs, fuel and fodder reserve, sanitary arrangement and so on). Information regarding each of the items mentioned above was recorded in the schedule itself by an official, either in the village or at a distance of a few miles only (Yang and Hagen 1976, p. 75). Therefore, it can be safely assumed that the data contained in the 'village notes' represent fairly authentically what existed (item-wise) in the villages at that time. One schedule was used for one village and then registers, each containing a hundred schedules—that is, 'village notes' (for a hundred villages)—were prepared. These were called 'village note registers'. All the villages of the different districts constituting Bihar at that time were thus covered. The 'village notes' of the villages of a district were then kept and preserved in the Revenue Records' Room of the Collectorate of that district in the shape of 'village note registers'. Table 2.1 presents the 'village notes' district-wise, which were consulted for the purpose of this study.

It is clear from Table 2.1 that the 'village notes' of 5,475 villages belonging to the nine districts of Bihar plain (located on both sides of the Ganga) were used for this study. In 1911, the total number

[2] See Letter No. 15185, dated 14 May 1895, from Director of Land Records to Superintendent, Government Printing, Bengal.

Table 2.1 *'Village Notes' Collected District-Wise*

District	*No. of 'Village Notes' Consulted*
Patna	2,383
Shahabad	693
Gaya	456
Bhagalpur	136
Purnea	91
Darbhanga	950
Muzaffarpur	289
Champaran	27
Saran	450
Total	5,475

of villages in the three divisions of Patna, Tirhut and Bhagalpur (which included the above districts) constituting the non-tribal zone of the state, was 46,526 (Singh and Kumar, 1970, p. 78). In 1901, the total number of villages in this zone was 51,547 (*ibid.*). It appears that 5,021 villages were deserted during the first decade of this century, probably due to the plague, cholera and malaria epidemics mentioned in the 'village notes'. In the course of persual of the available 'village notes,' it was found that these notes were prepared in different years in different districts, beginning from 1895 (in Muzaffarpur) to 1917 (in Shahabad). It is difficult to guess the exact number of villages during this period in the non-tribal zone of Bihar as, after 1911, the number of villages began to grow and in 1921, it was 47,421 (*ibid.*). However, the number of villages whose 'village notes' have been made available for analysis is about 11.76 per cent of 46,526 (the total number of villages of the above three divisions in 1911), 10.62 per cent of 51,547 (the total number of villages of the divisions, mentioned above, in 1901), and 11.54 per cent of 47,421 (the total number of villages of these divisions in 1921). Thus, the size of the sample (5,475) for the classification of villages in terms of a simple-complex continuum may be supposed to be large enough to represent the universe of villages of the Bihar plain, even though the selection of villages whose 'village notes' have been made available for this study was not strictly based on randomisation.

In a previous attempt to classify villages, only a hundred 'village notes' were analysed (Jha and Gopal, 1982, p. 125). It was found

that more often than not the villages of a particular locality were so clustered that a big, generally centrally located village having a number of castes, served as a feeder while others were satellites depending in many ways on this. In a cluster of villages constituting a locality (which, as a social setting, is well-recognised by the people of that area though it is difficult to define its boundary precisely), the feeder village is generally supposed to display more prominently the cultural and social trends of the locality. The villagers of satellite villages quite often depend on the feeder village for the identification of their own village. This happens particularly when they go to distant villages where they have to refer to the feeder village in order to enable the outsiders to identify their village as they generally remember only the feeder village. In the study based only on a hundred 'village notes,' only two categories of villages—feeder and satellite—were noticed in the context of the simple-complex continuum as the satellite villages were found to be those which depended on the feeder villages for health care, educational facilities, market, road and postal communication, and so on.

For this study, 5,475 'village notes' were analysed. Only two items (viz., the tenth and fifteenth out of fifteen items constituting the 'village note' schedule) were found to be relevant for our purpose. The tenth item contains information regarding the market and communication facilities available then in the village. In case a village did not have this facility at all, the name of the village which had market and communication facilities (even partially) and on which the former depended, has been mentioned in the 'village note' of that village. The fifteenth item of the 'village note' contains information regarding the following: names of castes present in the village, the caste-wise number of household or population, their occupation, educational institutions (if any), religious festivals and institutions, *jajmani* relations, condition of public health, fuel and fodder reserves and any other fact that the enumerator considered significant.

In the course of perusal of the information recorded against these two items in the 'village notes,' it was found that the feeder villages were of two types. One had a regular *bazar* for both wholesale and retail trade, a medical dispensary, a road (*kachcha*), a primary school (*pathashala* or *madarsa*), a post office and a police station. It was also regarded as being very old. At the same time, the number of people carrying on non-agricultural activities

(such as trade, cloth manufacturing, and money-lending) was found to be much more in this type of feeder village as compared to the other. This type has been termed Feeder-A.[3]

The other type of feeder village—termed Feeder-B—had a road, school and *hatia* (place where shops are organised occasionally at fixed intervals). Similarly, the satellite category was also found to be of two kinds—Satellite-A and Satellite-B. In a Satellite-B village, only a few families of one single caste (belonging either to the cluster of intermediate castes or to that of the lower castes or to that of the lower Muslim groups) were reported to be residing without having land of their own. This type of village had only two occupations—*bataidari* and *janouri*.[4] The Satellite-A category was considered to be more complex as the village of this category was found to be relatively bigger in size, having a population of various caste groups both landowning and landless. The number of occupations in this village must have been more than in a Satellite-B category village. Satellite-B, thus, is the simplest of the four types—Feeder-A, Feeder-B, Satellite-A and Satellite-B—forming an ordinal scale of villages in the context of inter-village setting on the basis of a decreasing order of (occupational) complexity from Feeder-A to Satellite-B. The extent of heterogeneity of occupations has been supposed to be an indicator of the complexity of a village. Since a village of the Feeder-A type was found to have the maximum number of occupations, besides agricultural ones (which of course were predominant), in comparison with the villages of other types, this type was considered to be the most complex of all. Further, being the centre of trade and communication in the locality, a Feeder-A village might be more open to external influences than the other types of villages. A Satellite-B village would, thus, be most closely bound to age-old local convention and tradition.

Similarly, in the context of the intra-village setting, it was assumed that the complexity of a village (that is, the complexity of relationships in the village) would depend to a great extent on the number of caste groups residing in the village. There are three

[3] For example, see the 'village notes' of Silao, No. 420, *pargana*-Telhara, Thana-Bihar, Distt Patna and of Benipur, No. 151/2, *pargana-Havi*, Thana-Bahera, Distt Darbhanga.

[4] For example, see the 'village notes' of Sonarbigha, No. 455, *pargana*-Rajgir, Thana-Bihar, Distt Patna; and of Chakmilki, No. 187, *pargana*-Loam, Thana-Bahera, Distt Darbhanga.

broad clusters of caste groups among the Hindus—the upper caste cluster (including the *brahman, bhumihar brahman, rajput,* and *kayastha*); the intermediate caste cluster (including all those caste groups which do not belong to the upper caste cluster and at the same time are not identified as scheduled castes); and the lower caste cluster (including those caste groups who are identified as scheduled castes). Besides, among the Muslims there are two clusters—one of upper class Muslims (such as the *sheikh* and *syed*) and the other of lower class Muslims (such as the *jolaha* and *dhunia*). Thus, altogether there are five clusters. The information given against the fifteenth item of each 'villages note' of the total 5,475 'village notes' was analysed in order to prepare a list of the number of villages on the basis of variation in the combination of caste clusters. Table 2.2 presents the number of villages for each of the combinations (of the above caste clusters as recorded in the 'village notes').

Out of 5,475 'village notes,' information relating to caste was available in only 4,171 'village notes'. A large number of the remaining 1,304 'village notes' were found to be of *bechiragi* villages. For the remaining few, caste-wise details had not been recorded. Out of the possible 31 combinations of five caste clusters —number of combination of all the five caste clusters = 1; of 4 out of 5 = 5; of 3 out of 5 = 10; of 2 out of 5 = 10 and of 1 out of 5 = 5—only 26 combinations were found to be mentioned in the 'village notes'. Further, it is clear from Table 2.2 that the villages having caste groups from all the caste clusters were not negligible in number. Among the combinations of four caste clusters, those of A + B + D + E (upper caste cluster + intermediate caste cluster + upper Muslims + lower Muslims) and A + C + D + E (upper caste cluster + lower caste cluster + upper Muslims + lower Muslims) were available in only 0.07 per cent and 0.04 per cent of the villages respectively. Similarly, combinations of A + B + D; B + D + E; D + C + E; A + C + E; A + B + E; B + D; D + E; B + E; C + E; A and E were also found to be negligibiy represented. It was, therefore, decided to reduce the 26 categories of the combinations of caste clusters into the following five broader clusters: C-5 (including all the caste clusters); C-4 (having all the available combinations of four caste clusters); C-3 (having all the available combinations of three caste clusters); C-2 (including all the combinations of two caste clusters); and C-1

Table 2.2 ***Number of Villages According to Combination of Caste Clusters***

Combination of Caste Clusters	*Frequency of Villages*	*Percentage*
A + B + C + D + E	314	7.52
A + B + C + D	89	2.13
A + B + D + E	3	0.07
A + C + D + E	2	0.04
B + C + D + E	206	4.93
A + B + C + E	762	18.25
A + B + D	2	0.04
B + E + D	5	0.11
B + C + D	88	2.10
D + C + E	9	0.21
A + C + E	4	0.09
A + B + E	7	0.16
A + B + C	1,322	31.69
B + C + E	214	5.13
A + B	72	1.72
B + D	2	0.04
A + C	61	1.46
D + C	7	0.16
D + E	2	0.04
B + C	717	17.19
B + E	15	0.35
C + E	14	0.33
A	8	0.19
B	155	3.71
C	82	1.96
E	9	0.21
Total	4,171	

Note: A = upper caste cluster; B = intermediate caste cluster; C = lower caste cluster; D = upper class Muslims; E = lower class Muslims.

(having all the available single caste clusters), indicating an ordinal scale of complexity in the context of intra-village setting. These broader clusters (C-5 to C-1) were then cross-tabulated with the four types—Feeder-A, Feeder-B, Satellite-A and Satellite-B. Table 2.3 presents figures of villages in this context.

It is clear from Table 2.3 that villages of the Feeder-A type were extremely limited in number (only 39 out of 4,171, that is, 0.93 per cent). They were multi-caste villages. Villages belonging to the Satellite-B category were also relatively few (only 105, or 2.51 per

Table 2.3 *Ordinal Categories: Inter-Village and Intra-Village Setting*

Ordinal Categories (Inter-Village Setting)	*Ordinal Categories (Intra-Village Setting)*					*Total*
	C-5	*C-4*	*C-3*	*C-2*	*C-1*	
Feeder A	19	18	2			39 (0.93)
Feeder B	68	88	68	8		232 (5.56)
Satellite A	227	956	1,581	882	149	3,795 (90.98)
Satellite B	—	—	—	—	105	105 (2.51)
Total	314	1,062	1,651	890	254	4,171

Note: C-5 stands for a combination of all the five caste clusters; C-4 includes all the available combinations of four caste clusters; C-3 includes all the available combinations of three caste clusters; C-2 includes all the available combinations of two caste clusters; and, similarly, C-1 includes all the available combinations of single caste clusters.

Figures in brackets are percentages.

cent). Each of these 105 villages had only one caste group, either from the lower caste cluster or from the intermediate caste cluster or from the lower Muslim groups. Satellite-A had the highest number of villages followed by Feeder-B. Table 2.3 indicates that out of twenty categories, only thirteen have a frequency of villages. However, for preparing the simple-complex continuum of the categories of villages distributed in Table 2.3, it was decided to assign the ranks 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 to the broader clusters of C-5, C-4, C-3, C-2 and C-1 respectively. Similarly, Feeder-A was assigned the rank of 4, Feeder-B rank 3, Satellite-A rank 2 and Satellite-B rank 1. The score of each of the thirteen categories (having a frequency of villages) in Table 2.3 was calculated. Table 2.4 shows the distribution of the categories of villages on the simple-complex continuum of scores.

It is obvious from Table 2.4 that the category Feeder-A (of villages having representation of all the five caste clusters [C-5]) may be supposed to be the most complex one. It has the highest score (20). The continuum presented in this table has eleven categories, with Satellite-B villages having representation

Table 2.4 ***Simple-Complex Continuum of Villages***

Categories of Villages	*Score of Complexity*	*Frequency of Villages*
Feeder A having C-5	20	19
Feeder A having C-4	16	18
Feeder B having C-5	15	68
Feeder B having C-4 and Feeder A having C-3	12	90
Satellite A having C-5	10	227
Feeder B having C-3	9	68
Satellite A having C-4	8	956
Satellite A having C-3 and Feeder B having C-2	6	1,589
Satellite A having C-2	4	882
Satellite A having C-1	2	149
Satellite B having C-1	1	105

from one of the castes of either the intermediate caste cluster or the lower caste cluster or lower Muslims, as the least complex (or simplest) of all. This has got the lowest score (1). On this continuum, the fourth and eighth positions have been shared by two categories. In the eighth position are Satellite-A C-3 and Feeder-B C-2. It seems that Satellite-A villages having caste groups from any three caste clusters would not significantly differ from Feeder-B villages having caste groups of only two caste clusters in terms of inter-village and intra-village complexity. Complexity has been assumed to be the result of the interaction of variations of occupational and caste factors. The fourth position has also been shared by two categories, viz., Feeder-B having representation of caste groups from four caste clusters and Feeder-A comprising caste groups from only three caste clusters.

A Feeder-A village is presumed to be more complex than a Feeder-B village because the extent of occupational heterogeneity is greater in the former than in the latter, as discussed before. At the same time, the greater the number of caste clusters having representation in a village, the more complex the intra-village relationship patterns tend to be. Therefore, a Feeder-B village with caste groups drawn from four caste clusters might not significantly differ in complexity from a Feeder-A village with caste groups from only three caste clusters. A Feeder-A village having caste groups drawn from all the five clusters would, thus, be the

most complex in the rural sector. Such a village might be a close approximation of an urban situation. An urban centre is characterised by a predominance of non-agricultural occupations, a large number of secondary groups and a high degree of heterogeneity of the population (D'Souza, 1974, pp. 129–31). A Feeder-A village having caste groups from all the caste clusters was found to have the maximum number of non-agricultural occupations (in addition to agricultural occupations) in comparison with the rest of the village categories. Further, as a sizeable part of the population was found to be participating in non-agricultural occupations such as trade (both wholesale and retail), manufacture of clothes, service at the postal communication centre and health centre, and money-lending, in the villages of this category, it may be assumed that some secondary groups might have emerged there to facilitate these activities.

'Village notes,' however, do not mention anything regarding the existence of secondary groups in such villages. So far as the heterogeneity of the population is concerned, these villages had the highest diversity in respect of both the occupational factor and caste factor in the rural sector. Thus, the three characteristics which together constitute a highly complex situation of an urban centre visibly different from the rural arena, were also found to be present, albeit to a lesser degree, in a Feeder-A village having caste groups from all the five caste clusters. Such a village, it may be supposed, has the potential of growing gradually into a full-fledged urban centre. One may further suppose that by stretching the continuum (presented in Table 2.4) beyond the first position (which is the highest position), the continuum can include the urban agglomeration as well. This is because this continuum has practically exhausted all the categories of villages and, at the same time, the first position has villages where urban features were found to be present to some extent, as discussed before. This continuum, thus, can qualify as a rural-urban continuum beginning from the simplest category of villages (Satellite-B C-1) to the urban set-up marked by the different categories of villages varying in complexity in terms of high and low, as presented in Table 2.4. Much has been written on the rural-urban continuum *vis-a-vis* the rural-urban dichotomy in rural sociology. But the former approach has not been substantiated so far by marking the stages on the continuum without which the very concept of the continuum loses

its relevance. The foregoing attempt might hopefully prove the empirical validity of this concept.

The categories of villages marked on the above continuum are based on the data collected during the first two decades of this century. Since then, particularly after independence, various socio-economic changes have been introduced into the rural sector. One may, therefore, assume that the villages of today might not be the same as they were seventy-five years ago. This, however, is subject to verification and, in this context, the data contained in the 'village notes' would prove to be of immense value. Besides, the rural sector of Bihar has been observed to be still in the grip of the same kind of social and economic inequalities which prevailed during the colonial period (Jannuzi, 1974, pp. 134–35; Hagen, 1981, p. 412). It seems, therefore, that the rural sector of Bihar (particularly the plains) has not undergone any structural change. As the continuum of categories of villages, discussed before, has been based on caste and occupational diversities within the village (which might have increased or decreased over time only in terms of degree and not in terms of qualitative alterations in the absence of any structural change in the rural sector in Bihar), it may be assumed that only the pattern of distribution of villages, category-wise, could vary across time; the continuum of categories as such should hopefully retain its analytical relevance for understanding the universe of villages in Bihar even today.

On the basis of the above assumption regarding the categories of villages, at least one village from each of the eleven categories from both the selected *parganas* of Bhojpur and Mithila should have been selected randomly for study. However, it was not possible to conduct a study on such a large sample of twenty-two villages due to the constraints of time and funds. Sampling on the basis of a broader clustering of caste clusters (see Table 2.3) would also have resulted in the selection of at least ten villages (five from Mithila and five from Bhojpur). This seemed to be too large a sample to make the proposed study feasible. The categories based on occupational variation within a village which makes it either Feeder-A or Satellite-B in the context of the inter-village setting are four in number. Among the feeder villages, Feeder-B is the modal category (see Table 2.3). Similarly, among the satellite villages, Satellite-A category is the mode. It was, therefore, decided to select one Feeder-B village and one Satellite-A village from each

of the regions chosen for study. The sample would, hopefully, represent a large number of villages if not the entire universe of study.

The 'village notes' of Bhojpur *pargana* (selected for study in the Bhojpuri speaking belt) of district Shahabad (which is now in district Bhojpur after the bifurcation of district Shahabad into two—Bhojpur and Rohtas) were consulted in this context. The villages of this *pargana* were found to be distributed in two thanas, namely, Dumraon and Buxar. In the former, there were 286 villages and in the latter 31 (the total number being 317). Out of 317, the number of Feeder-B villages was 34 and that of Satellite-A villages 218. Twenty-four villages were found to be *bechiragi* and the 'village notes' of 33 villages could not be deciphered. One of the Feeder-B villages—Chougain (No. 318, thana-Dumaraon)—was selected by lottery. Similarly, among the Satellite-A villages, Khewali (No. 345, thana-Dumraon) was selected. In the region of Mithila, Bhour *pargana* had been selected for study. In this *pargana*, the total number of villages was found to be 55. Of these, there were 3 in thana Phulparas and the rest in thana Madhubani. There were 5 Feeder-B villages and 45 Satellite-A villages. One Feeder-B village—namely, Bhagwatipur (No. 176, thana-Madhubani)—was selected out of 5 by lottery. Similarly, Parsa, (No. 185, thana-Madhubani) was selected as a Satellite-A village. These selected villages of both the *parganas* of Bhojpur and Bhour were then visited and their erstwhile features in terms of Feeder-B and Satellite-A were found to be still intact.

After selecting the villages, it was decided to conduct the study in two phases. In the first phase, details regarding the following issues were collected from each village: caste-wise number of households, names of the household heads according to caste, their occupational conditions (whether supervisory farmers or *bataidars* or petty shopowners, etc.), the way they rank themselves, and the different institutions through which day-to-day life at the primary level structure is carried on. Most of the data collected regarding the above issues were of a qualitative nature. For data collection in this phase, the investigators were advised to stay in each village, interact with the villagers as informally as possible and observe their group discussions. Informal group assemblies in a village are generally held at many places, like tea shops located at the *chowk*, the houses of rich and prominent men of each *tola* and also in temples.

The investigators were asked to cover as many discussion centres as possible. They were given diaries and were instructed to record all that they observed as well as the details of interactions that they came across every day among the villagers belonging to different castes and having various roles in different institutions of the village. They were given a list of issues (mentioned in the foregoing) for their own use in order to enable them to record in their diaries only the relevant parts of their daily encounters. They were also told to record conversations in the local dialect. Since the investigators were familiar with Maithili and Bhojpuri (the dialects of the villages selected), it was not difficult for them to do so. Before starting their investigation, they were taken to a village for a pilot study. The reports of the pilot study (prepared by them) were discussed with them and this helped a great deal in orienting them to the issues under consideration. Since the investigators themselves were from a rural background, it was not difficult for them to mingle with the villagers. As the work started, the principal investigator also joined them in the field to assist and guide them in carrying out their observation. The diaries, thus prepared, were then discussed by the principal investigator with the resource-men[5] and the following accounts of the villages were derived therefrom.

The primary level structure of each of the villages forming the sample was, as hypothesised earlier, found to be chiefly constituted by such institutions as family, *mahajani, bataidari, janouri* and *jajmani*. Besides these, the villagers' interactions among themselves (as recorded in their own dialects) clearly reflected the pervasive influence of a deep-rooted hierarchy in terms of *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh*. The villagers appeared to have introjected their ranks in this context to such an extent that the above categorisation seemed to be natural and legitimate on account of being reinforced by local tradition. In fact, the terms *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* were found to be frequently used in their conversations (recorded in the diaries of the investigators). As early as 1885, Grierson had also taken note of these two terms used by the villagers of Bihar to identify each other rank-wise (Grierson, 1885, p. 326). The day-to-day life in the villages was observed to be

[5] The members of the Friday Seminar Group were the resource men for this study.

virtually governed along the traditionally delimited boundaries of these two categories of *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh*. The term '*raja-praja* system' used by Hagen, discussed before, to explain the form of political economy at the village level in Bihar, perhaps, refers to this two-tier hierarchy of *baraka* and *chhotaka/nah* (Hagen, 1981, p. 201). The *baraka* people are also referred to by the term *malik* in the villages whose attributes have been historically examined by Hagen within the '*raja-praja* system' (*ibid.*, pp. 100–16). This hierarchy is reflected in literary works as well. For example, in *Maila Aanchal*, one of the most famous novels of Phanishwar Nath 'Renu' based on rural life in Bihar, its characters (belonging to the *chhotaka/nanh* strata) often refer to *malik* (or *babu*) while narrating their problems from their own point of view (Nath, 'Renu', 1984, pp. 113, 129). This hierarchy thus forms, culturally, a built-in core of the primary level structure of the village. It was, therefore, decided to include this institutionalised hierarchy in the list of institutions mentioned in the foregoing for this study.

Further, institution-wise roles were listed and the important themes or issues (in terms of their frequency) towards which interactions were found to be oriented (as reported in the diaries of the investigators) were also sorted out. It may be mentioned that the above institutions were observed to be common for all the four villages selected for study. Those institutions (which were found to be village-specific) were not included in the study. At the same time, the roles and themes listed relating to the institutions are also not exhaustive. However, they may be presumed to refer to the important domains of social relationships in these institutions because of their high frequency in the day-to-day activities of the people. Even the list of institutions observed to be common for all the villages under study is by no means exhaustive. Those selected for this study were found to be important on the basis of the analysis of everyday activities of the villagers reported in the diaries of the investigators. Table 2.5 presents the institution-wise roles and themes or issues.

Besides the information in Table 2.5, the details regarding the caste-wise number of households and the names of the household heads and their occupational backgrounds were also collected from each village. These details were collected by the investigators in a door-to-door survey of every *tola*. Each household head (or, in absence of a household head, any adult member of that household

Table 2.5 Institution-wise Roles and Themes

Institution	*Roles*	*Themes*
Family	Father, son, brother, relations, servant	Norms of etiquette; pattern of living; conflict; consequences of conflict; conflict resolution; accommodation
Hierarchy	*Baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh*	Conflict; conflict resolutions; sources of conflict; value of conflict; consequences of conflict; manipulation of conflict; consequences of the manipulation of conflict; norms of etiquette; coercion/exploitation; patronage
Mahajani	*Mahajan* and *khaduka*	Field of the operation of *mahajani*; norms of etiquette; modes of lending money/grain; modes of recovery of loan; exploitation and coercion; patronage; relationship among *mahajans*
Bataidari	*Malik* and *bataidar*	Operation of *bataidari* as conducted by *malik*; operation of *bataidari* as conducted by *bataidars*; exploitation and coercion; patronage
Janouri	*Malik* and *jan-halwaha*	Norms of etiquette; modes of operation of *janouri*; coercion/exploitation; conflict; patronage
Jajmani	*Jajman* and *pavani/purohit*	Modes of operation of *jajmani*; exploitation

or his close neighbour) was contacted for information about his name, caste and occupation. Occupationally, three classes are supposed to include the entire population of the villages, representing their socio-economic positions in quite a realistic manner as formulated by Ramkrishna Mukherjee. According to him:

> class I is composed of the occupational groups of *landholders* and *supervisory farmers* . . . . whose top-most position in society is unquestioned . . . . class II mainly comprises the self-sufficient peasantry, *viz*., the cultivators, but the *artisans* and *traders* are also included in this class because, like the cultivators, most of them barely maintain a somewhat self-sufficient existence, partly based on land . . . . class III is composed of the remaining occupational groups, *viz*., the *sharecroppers*, *agricultural labourers*, service-holders and others, which are formed

of those people who depend on working for other members of society.

Since Bihar, until 1912, was part of Bengal and both had been subjected to the same *zamindari* system during the colonial regime before independence, this classification based on Bengal villages was also thought to be appropriate for this study.[6] The information collected regarding the caste and occupation of each household head was then analysed village-wise. Caste groups were clustered into three categories, *viz*., upper caste groups, intermediate caste groups and lower caste groups. Upper class Muslims were included in the upper caste groups and lower class Muslim groups in the third category of lower caste groups. These caste categories were then cross-tabulated with the above class categories. Tables 2.6–2.13 present village-wise data in this context.

It may be mentioned here that the above scheme of occupational classification was used only to select the sample of respondents from each village under study. This three-grade vertical classification is not an institutionalised part of the primary level structure of the village. The villagers do not orient their behaviour in these terms. Instead, they entertain notions of only *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* as societal categories, in terms of which their behaviour patterns are traditionally articulated. In the village setting, these two categories are quite visible. People belonging to these categories are easily identified. However, a sizeable number remain left out of these two categories because they are not categorically identified as either *baraka* or *chhotaka/nanh*. These people may be grouped as a category occupying the middle position between *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh*.

This category seems to be missing in the cognition of the villagers. There is no local term used to identify it. A similar situation has

[6] Daniel Thorner also observed the agrarian structure to be constituted by three classes, *viz*., *malik*, *kisan* and *mazdoor*. These classes correspond fairly closely to the classes described by Ramkrishna Mukherjee. See D. Thorner, 1976, pp. 8–11. Mukherjee's attempt, however, is more broad-based. Thorner has focused on only the agrarian aspects. In a village, particularly in a 'feeder' village, occupational diversity is fairly well-pronounced and, therefore, classification at the level of the village setting (as a whole) has to incorporate even non-agricultural occupations, such as those of artisans, non-agricultural labourers, etc. Mukherjee's scheme includes almost all of them.

Table 2.6 ***Caste and Class-wise Number of Households in Chougain***

Caste-Cluster	*Caste*	*Class I (Upper)*	*Class II (Middle)*	*Class III (Lower)*	*Total*
Upper					
	Rajput	25	188		213
	Brahman	2	22		24
	Kayastha		20		20
Intermediate					
	Yadava	15	152	13	165
	Bhant			2	2
	Bania		78	7	85
	Turaha			21	21
	Tanti		2	42	44
	Kurmi		37	3	40
	Nai		19	5	24
	Kumhar		17		17
	Lohar		6		6
	Barhi		10		10
	Sonar		9		9
	Kanu	34			34
	Panheri	1			1
	Teli	15			15
	Kamkar	10	60		70
	Barai		6		6
	Gareri	3	27		30
	Koeri	25			25
	Miskar		4		4
	Nonia	1	12		13
	Rajbhar		3		3
Lower					
	Pasi		12		12
	Chamar		90		90
	Dusadh		40		40
	Mushar		35		35
	Mehtar		5		5
	Dom		10		10
	Dhobi		6		6
	Gadhera		15		15
	Lower Muslims	12	115		127
Total		42	661	533	1,221

Table 2.7 ***Number of Households According to Caste-Cluster and Class in Chougain***

Caste-Cluster	*Class I (Upper)*	*Class II (Middle)*	*Class III (Lower)*	*Total*
Upper	27	230		257
Intermediate		419	205	624
Lower		12	328	340
Total	27	661	533	1,221

Table 2.8 ***Number of Households According to Caste and Class in Khewali***

Caste-Cluster	*Caste*	*Class I (Upper)*	*Class II (Middle)*	*Class III (Lower)*	*Total*
Upper					
	Yadava	3	10	63	76
	Rajbhar	1	3	50	54
Intermediate					
	Koeri	3	3	16	22
	Teli		1	4	5
	Gond			6	6
	Kanu			3	3
	Nai			1	1
	Lohar			1	1
Lower					
	Chamar		1	38	39
Total		7	18	182	207

Table 2.9 ***Number of Households According to Caste-Cluster and Class in Khewali***

Caste-Cluster	*Class I (Upper)*	*Class II (Middle)*	*Class III (Lower)*	*Total*
Upper				
Intermediate	7	17	144	168
Lower		1	38	39
Total	7	18	182	207

Table 2.10 ***Number of Households According to Caste and Class in Parsa***

Caste-Cluster	*Caste*	*Class I (Upper)*	*Class II (Middle)*	*Class III (Lower)*	*Total*
Upper					
	Rajput	16	15	32	63
	Sheikh	6	7	162	175
	Yadava	12	6	52	70
	Suri	1	2	6	9
	Teli	1	2	2	5
	Sonar	1	4		5
Intermediate					
	Halwai		1		1
	Dhanuk			6	6
	Hajam (Nai)			1	1
	Kurmi			3	3
Lower					
	Chamar	1	1	9	11
	Dusadh			26	26
	Dhobi			1	1
Total		38	38	300	376

Table 2.11 ***Number of Households According to Caste-Cluster and Class in Parsa***

Caste-Cluster	*Class I (Upper)*	*Class II (Middle)*	*Class III (Lower)*	*Total*
Upper	22	22	194	238
Intermediate	15	15	70	100
Lower	1	1	36	38
Total	38	38	300	376

been observed in the rural sectors of the other regions too.[7] In fact, the people grouped under the middle category readily take to the

[7] R.K. Jain, in his study of a village in Madhya Pradesh, has also taken note of only two categories (*viz.*, *bhale log* and *garib log*) as identified by the villagers in the context of hierarchy to which they are oriented in their everyday life. The third category of *khate pite log* is, according to him, 'as yet unformed into a class of middle peasants'. See Jain, 1977, p. 96.

Table 2.12 ***Number of Households According to Caste and Class in Bhagwatipur***

Caste-Cluster	*Caste*	*Class I (Upper)*	*Class II (Middle)*	*Class III (Lower)*	*Total*
Upper					
	Bhumihar				
	Brahman		1		1
	Sheikh		15	95	110
	Brahman	1			1
	Suri	20			20
	Teli	2	5	13	20
	Halwai	1	15	7	23
	Yadava		5	15	20
Intermediate					
	Barhi		4	4	8
	Kumhar		4	14	18
	Mallah			96	96
	Dhanuk			11	11
	Sonar			1	1
	Amat			7	7
	Hajam (Nai)			9	9
	Pasi	2		4	6
	Dusadh			5	5
	Chamar			16	16
Lower					
	Laheri		4	4	8
	Dom			1	1
	Kujra		2	5	7
	Nadaf		1	13	14
	Ansari		3	52	55
Total		26	59	372	457

Table 2.13 ***Number of Households According to Caste-Cluster and Class in Bhagwatipur***

Caste-Cluster	*Class I (Upper)*	*Class II (Middle)*	*Class III (Lower)*	*Total*
Upper	1	16	95	112
Intermediate	23	33	177	233
Lower	2	10	100	112
Total	26	59	372	457

baraka and/or the *chhotaka/nanh* frame of reference in their day-to-day life. While interacting with *baraka* men, they consider themselves *chhotaka-nanh*; they change their role and switch over to that of *baraka* when they confront *chhotaka/nanh*. It is true that the relationship patterns of *baraka* versus *chhotaka/nanh* might not be the same as those of *baraka* versus situationally supposed *chhotaka/nanh* or as those of situationally supposed *baraka* versus *chhotaka/nanh*. Yet, the overall acceptance and recognition of these categories (*baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh*) by people in the village setting cannot be ruled out.

Tables 2.6, 2.8, 2.10 and 2.12 indicate the caste and class-wise strength of households in Chougain, Khewali, Parsa and Bhagwatipur respectively. Chougain, a Feeder-B village of Bhojpur, is a fairly big village with representation from all the caste clusters except the upper Muslims. It is dominated by *rajputs* both numerically and economically. The most dominant families belong to the *rajput* caste and they had large *zamindaris* before independence. Khewali, a Satellite-A village, is relatively small in size. It has no representation from the upper caste cluster. In Mithila too, Parsa, a Satellite-A village, is smaller in size than Bhagwatipur, a Feeder-B village. Both these villages have representation from all the caste clusters.

According to Tables 2.7, 2.9, 2.11 and 2.13, the households of each village are distributed into the following nine cells: Cell 1 (upper caste cluster and upper class); Cell 2 (upper caste cluster and middle class); Cell 3 (upper caste cluster and lower class); Cell 4 (intermediate caste cluster and upper class); Cell 5 (intermediate caste cluster and middle class); Cell 6 (intermediate caste cluster and lower class); Cell 7 (lower caste cluster and upper class); Cell 8 (lower caste cluster and middle class); and Cell 9 (lower caste cluster and lower class). From each cell (in each village) at least 20 per cent of the total number of households (belonging to that cell) were selected as a sample. A cell-wise list of names of the household heads for each village had already been prepared on the basis of caste and class-wise details of each household head of every village under study. Samples of household heads were selected by lottery from each cell in each village. For some cells which had very few households, the sample size became bigger than the minimum size (20 per cent of the total number of household heads) decided. Table 2.14 gives details of the sample of household heads selected cell-wise and village-wise.

Table 2.14 *Number of Sampled Household Heads, Cell-Wise and Village-Wise*

Cell	*Chougain*	*Khewali*	*Parsa*	*Bhagwatipur*	*Total*
1	7		6	1	14
2	51		6	5	62
3			28	24	52
4		2	2	3	7
5	109	3	2	9	123
6	55	38	7	48	148
7			1		1
8	7	1	1	6	15
9	66	13	30	25	134
Total	295	57	83	121	556

Table 2.14 indicates that the total number of household heads selected for the sample (taking all the cells together) in Chougain is 295 (or about 24 per cent of the total number of household heads of this village). At Khewali, the number of household heads in the sample is 57 (or about 27 per cent of the total number of household heads in the village). At Parsa, the sample includes 83 household heads (about 22 per cent of the total number of household heads). At Bhagwatipur, the sample consists of about 26 per cent of the total number of household heads. Altogether, the total number of household heads forming the sample of all the household heads of the four villages under study is 556 (or about 24 per cent of the total number of household heads of these villages combined).

After preparing the lists of the names of household heads selected for the sample from each cell, the resource-persons were consulted to draw up an interview schedule for the household heads selected. The diaries of the investigators containing qualitative information about each village were examined and discussed by the principal investigator with the resource-men in order to prepare the items of the schedule. Altogether, 103 items were prepared institution, role and theme-wise. Details contained in the diaries as well as the personal experience of the principal investigator and that of the resource-men were also taken into account in preparing these items. Further, it was decided to elicit the response of respondents in terms of one of the following three categories: frequently (*F*); seldom (*S*); and never (*N*). The decision as to whether a behaviour (included as an item in the schedule) is typical of a particular role or not was taken on the basis of the frequency of responses to the above categories (*F*, *S* and *N*) against that behaviour (or item).

In the second phase of study, data were collected from the household heads selected with the help of the schedule. It was decided to interview any available adult member of a household (included in the sample) in absence of its head. The details of the analysis (institution-wise) and the findings thereof follow chapter-wise.

THREE

Relationships in the Family

According to Leela Dube (1974, p. 298), 'in the study of Indian society, the institution of the family has been next only to caste in receiving the attention of sociologists and also of social anthropologists.' Empirical researches on family are considerable in number. However, the issues relating to the structure and types of family, its composition, impact of urbanisation and industrialisation on it and the patterns of its change have generally been the focus of these researches (*ibid.*, pp. 298–325). In this study, the objective is to examine this institution by exploring the modal relationships among its members. This has been, more or less, an ignored area of research in this context.

The roles selected for study under this head are only five in number, *viz.*, father, son, brother, relation and house-servant. Other roles related to female members were not included because in the villages, generally, people do not like to discuss issues concerning the female members of their families. The themes related to the modal behaviour patterns of the above roles are norms of etiquette; patterns of living together; styles of conflict; typical consequences of conflict; styles of conflict resolution; and styles of accommodation in the family.

Regarding the first theme, seven items were included in the schedule. For the second, there were four items. There were five items concerning the styles of conflict; four concerning the styles of conflict resolution; four regarding the typical consequences of

conflict; and five concerning the styles of accommodation. Altogether, twenty-nine items were included in the schedule for understanding the typical relationship styles in the institution of family.

The item-wise analysis of the responses gathered from the sampled household heads of the four villages is given below:

Norms of Etiquette

In the context of norms of etiquette, the following seven items were included (three for the *baraka* family and four for the *chhotaka/nanh* family).[1]

1. Elders in a *baraka* family are addressed by honorific terms.
2. Juniors in a *baraka* family feel constrained in expressing their feelings in the presence of their seniors.
3. Juniors in a *baraka* family are also addressed with *ji/babu*, etc., suffixed to their names.
4. Seniors in a *chhotaka/nanh* family are addressed as *hou/ho*.
5. A member (male) of a *chhotaka/nanh* family has more than one name.
6. The names of the juniors of *chhotaka/nanh* families are vulgarised while being addressed by their seniors.
7. Abusive words are used by the members of *chhotaka/nanh* families even in conversation.

Table 3.1 presents the responses, region and village-wise, to the first item. This item refers to the respectful speech behaviour of juniors towards their seniors in a *baraka* family. *Apne/sarkar/roua* are respectful forms of address. In the Bhojpur belt, all these three forms were observed to be in use during the phase of qualitative data collection while in Mithila there were only *apne* and *sarkar*. *Roua* is a Bhojpuri word and, therefore, it is not spoken in Mithila. However, it is clear from Table 3.1 that in Bhojpur, the pattern of responses in this connection varies from Chougain to Khewali.

At Chougain (which is a Feeder-B village), 88.5 per cent of the

[1] I have translated the items of the schedule into English.

Table 3.1 *Responses to the Item: Elders in a* **Baraka** *Family are Addressed by Honorific Terms*

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	261 (88.5)	24 (8.1)	10 (3.4)	—	—	295
	Khewali	23 (40.4)	26 (45.6)	8 (14.0)	—	—	57
Mithila	Parsa	80 (96.4)	3 (3.6)	—	—	—	83
	Bhagwatipur	120 (99.2)	—	—	—	1 (0.8)	121

Note: The figures in parenthesis in this table and the following tables indicate percentage of row total. In this and subsequent tables F = frequently; S = seldom; N = never; DK = do not know; NA = not available.

responses indicate that respectful terms are used by the juniors for their seniors in a *baraka* (upper) family *frequently*. Those saying that such addresses are used *seldom* are only 8.1 per cent and those saying that such addresses are *never* used are very few in number (only 3.4 per cent). One may, therefore, infer that using respectful terms of address by juniors for their seniors is the modal behaviour at Chougain. But this is not so at Khewali, which is a Satellite village, where the majority (45.6 per cent) of the respondents seem to believe that such addresses are only *seldom* used. Those saying that these addresses are *never* used are also more in number here (14.0 per cent) than at Chougain. It is, therefore, difficult to say that using respectful terms of address is a typical behaviour pattern of juniors towards their seniors in a *baraka* family at Khewali. The difference in the frequency of responses in terms of F (frequently) and S (seldom) is also not significant here ($x^2 = 0.18$, not significant at the 95 per cent level of significance). In Mithila, however, as both Parsa and Bhagwatipur have an overwhelming number of responses (96.4 per cent at Parsa and 99.2 per cent at Bhagwatipur) in this context, it may be held as a typical behaviour pattern of juniors in *baraka* families.

Table 3.2 illustrates the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, regarding the second item, *viz.*: Juniors in a *baraka*

Table 3.2 ***Responses to the Item: Juniors in a* Baraka *Family Feel Constrained in Expressing their Feelings in the Presence of their Seniors***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	205 (69.5)	42 (14.2)	47 (15.9)	—	1 (0.3)	295
	Khewali	46 (80.7)	10 (17.5)	1 (1.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	82 (98.8)	—	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	67 (55.4)	30 (24.8)	22 (18.2)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

family feel constrained in expressing their feelings in the presence of their seniors. It is obvious from this table that in every village, the majority of the responses indicate that juniors in a *baraka* family consider the presence of seniors seriously and feel constrained in talking freely and informally before them. However, in the satellite villages, this practice seems to be more strictly adhered to than in the feeder villages. At Khewali, 80.7 per cent and at Parsa, 98.8 per cent of the respondents were of the opinion that this behaviour is frequent. In the feeder villages, the number of responses in this context is not so overwhelming—69.5 per cent at Chougain and 55.4 per cent at Bhagwatipur. One may, therefore, suppose that this intra-familial behaviour of juniors is more typical in the satellite villages than at the feeder ones.

Table 3.3 indicates the responses, region and village-wise, to the third item: Juniors in a *baraka* family are also addressed with *ji*, *babu*, etc., suffixed to their names. It is clear from this table that in all the villages under study except Khewali, even the juniors in *baraka* families are addressed with *ji* and *babu* suffixed to their names *frequently*. In Mithila, in both the villages this practice seems to be strongly followed. In Bhojpur, it is only at Chougain (a feeder village) that the responses (77.3 per cent) in this context indicate it as being modal. At Khewali, the number of responses in this context is only 13 (22.8 per cent). According to 59.6 per cent of the respondents of this village, the juniors in *baraka* families are *seldom* addressed with *ji* and *babu* suffixed to their names. Therefore, this cannot be supposed to be typical of *baraka* families at

Table 3.3 *Responses to the Item: Juniors in a* **Baraka** *Family are also Addressed with* **Ji, Babu** *Suffixed to their Names*

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	228 (77.3)	50 (16.5)	17 (5.8)	—	—	295
	Khewali	13 (22.8)	34 (59.6)	10 (17.5)	—	—	57
	Parsa	73 (88.0)	10 (12.0)	—	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	115 (95.0)	5 (4.1)	—	—	1 (0.8)	121

Khewali. Since Khewali falls in the Satellite-A category, which includes an overwhelming number of villages (Feeder-B villages are relatively few in number, mentioned before), one can suppose that in Bhojpur, generally, the practice of addressing even juniors respectfully in the *baraka* families is not typical. This is unlike Mithila where, at both Feeder-B and Satellite-A villages, this practice has been found to be typical.

Table 3.4 shows the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the fourth item, *viz.*: Seniors in a *chhotaka/nanh* family are addressed as *hou/ho*. It is clear from this table that this style of addressing seniors is typical among the *chhotaka/nanh* families in both Bhojpur and Mithila. In these families, honorific forms of address, it would seem, are not used. In this context, the regional variation or village-wise variation has not been observed to be important.

Table 3.5 presents the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the item: A member of a *chhotaka/nanh* family has more than one name. This item relates to the norm of naming. Generally, a *baraka* family by tradition has two or three or even more names for each of its members. In the course of qualitative data collection, it was observed that some of the *chhotaka/nanh* families had also adopted this pattern. It was, therefore, decided to see if it had become typical of *chhotaka/nanh* families or not? In this context, Bhojpur presents a different picture from Mithila. Further, in the feeder villages of both the regions, the pattern of responses is the same (61.7 per cent of the respondents in Chougain

Table 3.4 ***Responses to the Item: Seniors in a*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***Family are Addressed as*** **Hou/Ho**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	211 (71.5)	72 (24.4)	12 (4.1)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	56 (98.2)	—	1 (1.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	82 (98.8)	—	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	117 (96.7)	—	—	3 (2.5)	1 (0.5)	121

Table 3.5 ***Responses to the Item: A Member of a*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***Family has more than One Name***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	66 (22.4)	182 (61.7)	45 (15.3)	2 (0.7)	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	13 (22.8)	42 (73.7)	2 (3.5)	—	—	57
	Parsa	2 (2.4)	5 (6.0)	75 (90.4)	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	4 (3.3)	89 (73.6)	25 (20.7)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	121

said that *seldom* does a member of a *chhotaka/nanh* family have more than one name and at Bhagwatipur 73.6 per cent of the respondents said so). However, the satellite villages present contrasting pictures. At Khewali, this practice seems to be seldom adopted by the *chhotaka/nanh* families while at Parsa, 90.4 per cent of the respondents said that a member of a *chhotaka/nanh* family never has more than one name. Considering the numerical strength of Satellite-A villages in both Bhojpur and Mithila (see Table 2.3), one may assume that seldom does a member of a *chhotaka/nanh* family have more than one name. In Mithila, the modal response is that the member of a *chhotaka/nanh* family never has more than one name.

Table 3.6 gives the distribution of responses to the sixth item *viz.*: The names of juniors of such a family (of *chhotaka/nanh*) are vulgarised while being addressed by seniors. It is obvious from this table that vulgarising juniors' names (e.g., Shambhu would be called Shambhua) is a typical practice among a *chhotaka/nanh* families in all the villages under study. This indicates that disrespectful forms of address are generally used for juniors in *chhotaka/nanh* families. In Chougain, though the difference between the frequencies of the third and fourth column is not significant ($x^2 = 1.88$, not significant at the 95 per cent level of significance), the category F (frequently) has drawn the highest number of responses. Therefore, this behaviour may be held to be modal in this village as well.

Table 3.6 ***Responses to the Item: The Names of Juniors of*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***Families are Vulgarised while being Addressed by their Seniors***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	116	96	82	1	—	295
		(39.3)	(32.5)	(27.8)	(0.3)		
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	46	9	2	—	—	57
		(80.7)	(15.8)	(3.5)			
	Parsa	80	—	2	1	—	83
		(96.4)		(2.4)	(1.2)		
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	111	7	—	2	1	121
		(91.7)	(5.8)		(1.7)	(0.8)	

Table 3.7 shows the distribution of responses to the seventh item, *viz.*: Abusive words are used by the members of such a family (*chhotaka/nanh*) even in their conversation. It is clear from this table that the use of abusive words in conversation is not typical of *chhotaka/nanh* families in the villages under study. However, as the frequencies indicate, one can say that abusive words are seldom used by the members of *chhotaka/nanh* families in conversation both in Bhojpur and Mithila.

Tables 3.4, 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7 make it clear that *chhotaka/nanh* families do not have honorific forms of address, though the use of abusive words in conversation is not frequent. The regional variation has been observed to be important in this context. In Bhojpur,

Table 3.7 ***Responses to the Item: Abusive Words are Used by Members of the*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***Family Even in Conversation***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	43 (14.6)	139 (47.1)	112 (38.0)	1 (0.3)	—	295
	Khewali	22 (38.6)	24 (42.1)	11 (19.3)	—	—	57
	Parsa	3 (3.6)	79 (95.2)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	6 (5.0)	107 (88.4)	5 (4.1)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	121

chhotaka/nanh families, it appears, are fairly close to *baraka* families in respect of following the norms of etiquette. None of them use honorific forms of address in their day-to-day activities unlike Mithila. It appears that Bhojpuri society is more egalitarian in this respect than that of Mithila where the sense of hierarchy seems to be strong.

Patterns of Living

Four items were included in the schedule regarding the patterns of living practised by the *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* families.

1. Members of a *baraka* family generally pass their time separately.
2. *Purdah* is observed strictly among *baraka* families.
3. Members of a *chhotaka/nanh* family always pass their time by remaining together.
4. Members of a *chhotaka/nanh* family together take intoxicants too.

Table 3.8 illustrates the distribution of responses region and village-wise to the first item. It is clear from this table that the majority of respondents in each village considered it typical of *baraka* family-members to pass most of the time everyday separately. In Bhojpur, responses in this context are not overwhelming

Table 3.8 *Responses to the Item: Members of a* **Baraka** *Family generally Pass their Time Separately*

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	153 (51.9)	131 (44.4)	11 (3.7)	—	—	295
	Khewali	31 (54.4)	24 (42.1)	2 (3.5)	—	—	57
	Parsa	79 (95.2)	3 (3.6)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	64 (52.9)	18 (14.9)	37 (30.6)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

in number. The situation in Bhagwatipur of Mithila is similar. But, at Parsa, 95.2 per cent of the respondents considered it the modal living style among *baraka* families. Since satellite villages are in a majority, one can suppose that a preference for privacy in day-to-day living is more pronounced among the *baraka* families of Mithila than among those of Bhojpur.

Table 3.9 presents the distribution of responses to the second item, *viz.*: *Purdah* is observed strictly among *baraka* families. It is clear from this table that observing *purdah* strictly is typical of *baraka* families at Parsa and Chougain. These villages, as mentioned before, are dominated by the upper castes both numerically and economically. Khewali and Bhagwatipur are dominated by the non-upper castes (Tables 2.8 and 2.12). It seems that the *purdah* system is associated with the upper castes and, therefore, is not being strictly observed by the *baraka* families frequently in these two villages. Of the villages where the observation of this system is the mode amongst the *baraka* families, Parsa has 98.8 per cent of the responses in this context. Chougain has only 59.3 per cent of its respondents saying that *purdah* is frequently observed in the *baraka* families. Observation of *purdah*, thus, seems to be more typical of *baraka* families in Parsa than of those in Chougain. Further, when we compare Khewali with Bhagwatipur in this context, the former has 57.9 per cent of its respondents saying that *purdah* is *never* strictly observed by *baraka* families while the latter has only 21.5 per cent of responses in this regard. Thus, the above data also support the finding regarding the first item (Table 3.8) that preference for

Table 3.9 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Purdah** ***is Observed Strictly Among*** **Baraka** ***Families***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	175 (59.3)	42 (14.2)	75 (25.4)	3 (1.0)	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	7 (12.3)	17 (29.8)	33 (57.9)	—	—	57
	Parsa	82 (98.8)	—	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	35 (28.9)	58 (47.9)	26 (21.5)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

privacy among *baraka* families is more pronounced in Mithila than in Bhojpur.

Table 3.10 gives the distribution of responses region and village-wise regarding the third item, *viz.*: Members of a *chhotaka/nanh* family always pass their time by remaining together. It is clear from this table that in the satellite villages, communal living seems to be typical of *chhotaka/nanh* families. Feeder villages, being relatively more heterogeneous and complex, have people engaged even in non-agricultural occupations. Perhaps, due to occupational heterogeneity, it is not feasible for *chhotaka/nanh* family-members to remain together both at home and at work. But in the satellite villages, occupational heterogeneity is relatively less and the population engaged in agricultural occupations is much greater here than in the feeder villages. It is probably for this reason that communal living seems to be typical of the *chhotaka/nanh* families of Khewali and Parsa. Since satellite villages are numerous, one may suppose that this style of living is the modal pattern of living prevalent among the *chhotaka/nanh* families both in Bhojpur and Mithila. However, considering the responses (54.4 per cent in Khewali and 95.2 per cent in Parsa) in this context, this pattern of living seems to be more typical of the *chhotaka/nanh* families in Mithila than in Bhojpur.

Table 3.11 illustrates the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the fourth item, *viz.*: Members of a *chhotaka/nanh* family together take intoxicants too. It is obvious from this table that even taking intoxicating drinks together, though prevalent to

Table 3.10 ***Responses to the Item: Members of a*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***Family Always Pass their Time by Remaining Together***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	65 (22.0)	199 (67.5)	30 (10.2)	1 (0.3)	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	31 (54.4)	23 (40.4)	3 (5.3)	—	—	57
	Parsa	79 (95.2)	3 (3.6)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	5 (4.1)	106 (87.6)	6 (5.0)	3 (2.5)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 3.11 ***Responses to the Item: Members of a*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***Family Together Take Intoxicants too***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	45 (15.3)	102 (34.6)	147 (49.8)	1 (0.3)	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	19 (33.3)	15 (26.3)	23 (40.4)	—	—	57
	Parsa	21 (25.3)	61 (73.5)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	7 (5.8)	52 (43.0)	60 (49.6)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

some extent, is not typical of the *chhotaka/nanh* families anywhere. It is, thus, clear from Tables 3.8, 3.9, 3.10 and 3.11 that *baraka* families differ from the *chhotaka/nanh* families in the context of style of living. Among the former, members live and work separately most of the time. Privacy may be supposed to mark their living style in day-to-day life, while communal living seems to be typical of the *chhotaka/nanh* families.

Styles of Conflict

Five items were included in the schedule regarding styles of conflict in *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* families.

1. Juniors in a *baraka* family answer their elders back in case of differences.
2. Juniors in a *baraka* family express anger indirectly by refusing to talk to anyone, refusing to eat food, etc.
3. Members of a *baraka* family exchange abuses/blows in case of differences.
4. Juniors in a *chhotaka/nanh* family answer their elders back in case of differences.
5. Father and son in a *chhotaka/nanh* family also resort to abuses/blows when there are great differences between them.

Table 3.12 contains the distribution of responses region and village-wise regarding the first item, mentioned in the foregoing. It is obvious from this table that *seldom* do the juniors in a *baraka* family answer their elders back in case of differences at Khewali and Bhagwatipur. At Chougain and Parsa (both dominated by the upper castes), *never* answering the elders back is the typical behaviour of juniors in a *baraka* family. Answering elders back frequently has not been found to be the modal behaviour of juniors in *baraka* families in any of the villages studied.

Table 3.12 ***Responses to the Item: Juniors in a* Baraka *Family Answer their Elders Back in Case of Differences***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	21 (7.1)	114 (38.6)	160 (54.2)	—	—	295
	Khewali	3 (5.3)	38 (66.7)	16 (28.1)	—	—	57
	Parsa	0 (0.0)	19 (22.9)	64 (77.1)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	28 (23.1)	78 (64.5)	14 (11.6)	—	1 (0.8)	121

Table 3.13 provides the distribution of responses to the second item, mentioned above. It is clear from this table that it is typical of juniors in a *baraka* family in Mithila to express their anger

Table 3.13 *Responses to the Item: Juniors in a* **Baraka** *Family Express Anger Indirectly by Refusing to Talk to Anyone/Refusing to Eat Food*

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	55 (18.6)	147 (49.8)	93 (31.5)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	16 (28.1)	39 (68.4)	2 (3.9)	—	—	57
	Parsa	76 (91.6)	7 (8.4)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	91 (75.2)	21 (17.4)	3 (2.5)	5 (4.1)	1 (0.8)	121

indirectly by refusing to talk to anyone or by refusing to eat food. In Bhojpur, this is not the typical behaviour of juniors. Possibly, they express their anger directly. This also indicates that the intra-familial hierarchy is quite pronounced in Mithila.

Table 3.14 presents the distribution of responses to the third item, *viz*.: Members of a *baraka* family exchange abuses/blows in case of differences. It is obvious from this table that exchanging abuses/blows is not the typical behaviour of *baraka* family members anywhere. However, in Bhojpur, responses indicating that they do so *seldom* or *frequently* are more in number than those in Mithila. In Mithila *never* exchanging abuses/blows is the mode characterising the behaviour of the members of *baraka* families, even when they have differences among themselves. It seems that the members of *baraka* families in Bhojpur tend to resort to violence more easily than those of Mithila.

Table 3.15 shows the distribution of responses to the fourth item, *viz*.: Juniors in a *chhotaka/nanh* family answer their elders back in case of differences. It is clear from this table that the juniors of these families answer their elders back when they have dissension among themselves. However, in the feeder villages this is not the typical behaviour of juniors. At Bhagwatipur, the responses indicating that the juniors answer their seniors back *frequently*, though the maximum (48.8 per cent), are not significantly different from the number of those saying that the same behaviour is practised by the juniors *seldom*. At Chougain, the highest number of respondents (42.7 per cent) said that the juniors

Table 3.14 ***Responses to the Item: Members of a* Baraka *Family Exchange Abuses/ Blows in Case of Differences***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	44 (14.9)	141 (47.8)	110 (37.3)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	5 (8.8)	35 (61.4)	17 (29.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	4 (4.8)	10 (12.0)	68 (81.9)	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	1 (0.8)	34 (28.1)	84 (69.4)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 3.15 ***Responses to the Item: Juniors in a* Chhotaka/Nanh *Family Answer their Elders Back in Case of Differences***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	98 (32.2)	126 (42.7)	71 (24.1)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	45 (78.9)	7 (12.3)	5 (8.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	81 (97.6)	1 (1.2)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	59 (48.8)	58 (47.9)	1 (0.8)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	121

in the *chhotaka/nanh* family answer their elders back *seldom* in case of dissension. In the satellite villages, this appears to be the typical behaviour of juniors. Considering the numerical strength of the satellite villages both in Bhojpur and Mithila, one may presume that answering the elders back is the typical behaviour of juniors in the *chhotaka/nanh* families. Besides, in the feeder villages too, the responses supporting the above are quite sizeable (at Chougain, 32.2 per cent and at Bhagwatipur, 48.8 per cent).

Table 3.16 contains the distribution of responses to the fifth item, *viz*.: Father and son in a *chhotaka/nanh* family also resort to the exchange of abuses/blows when there are great differences between them. It is obvious from this table that when there are

Table 3.16 *Responses to the Item: Father and Son in a* Chhotaka/Nanh *Family Also Resort to Abuses/Blows When there are Great Differences Between Them*

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	121 (41.0)	100 (33.9)	74 (25.1)	—	—	295
	Khewali	34 (59.6)	17 (29.8)	6 (10.5)	—	—	57
	Parsa	81 (97.6)	1 (1.2)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	90 (74.4)	28 (23.1)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

too many differences in the *chhotaka/nanh* family, even the father and son resort to violence both in Bhojpur and Mithila *frequently*. At Chougain, the number of respondents saying this (though highest, 41.0 per cent) is not significantly different from those saying that the father and son in a *chhotaka/nanh* family resort to violence *seldom* ($x^2 = 1.98$). At Khewali, an overwhelming number of respondents (59.6 per cent) reported that even the father and son in a *chhotaka/nanh* family resort to violence (exchange of abuses/blows) frequently in the case of great differences. At Bhagwatipur and Parsa too, the responses indicating such behaviour are overwhelming. Thus, one may suppose that this is a typical mode of conflict in the *chhotaka/nanh* family.

Tables 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15 and 3.16 make it clear that intra-familial behaviour in the context of conflict among the *chhotaka/nanh* people is different from that of *baraka* people. Among the former, juniors answer their elders back. But in a *baraka* family, they do not do so. Similarly, exchange of abuses/blows between even father and son occurs in *chhotaka/nanh* families rather *frequently*, but this is not so of *baraka* families. However, as mentioned before, the intra-familial hierarchy seems to be more pronounced among the *baraka* people of Mithila than among that of Bhojpur, even in the context of intra-family conflict.

Consequences of Conflict

Four items were included in the schedule in the context of the consequences of conflict.

1. *Jhagra* arises in a *baraka* family when there are too many differences.
2. Brothers in a *baraka* family stop eating together, meeting each other and talking to each other while they are fighting.
3. Partition of a *baraka* family takes place due to acute differences in the family.
4. Partition of the homestead/lands takes place in a *baraka* family even during the lifetime of parents.

Table 3.17 contains the distribution of responses to the first item. *Jhagra* is a term generally used in Mithila and Bhojpur dialects for serious and prolonged conflict. It is obvious from Table 3.17 that *jhagra* occurs in a *baraka* family in Mithila *frequently* as and when there are too many differences. In Bhojpur, it occurs very seldom.

Table 3.17 ***Responses to the Item: Jhagra Arises in a* Baraka *Family When there are too Many Differences***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	61 (20.7)	176 (59.7)	57 (19.3)	1 (0.3)	—	295
	Khewali	9 (15.8)	44 (77.2)	4 (7.0)	—	—	57
	Parsa	78 (94.0)	2 (2.4)	2 (2.4)	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	114 (94.2)	5 (4.1)	—	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 3.18 illustrates the distribution of responses to the second item. This table also indicates the regional variation in regard to the pattern of responses. In Mithila, brothers in a *baraka* family stop eating together, meeting each other, talking to each other, and so on, *frequently* when there is *jhagra* amongst them. In other words, all relations are severed among them. This happens only *seldom* in Bhojpur. It seems that the separatist tendency at the intra-familial level is higher among the *baraka* families of Mithila than amongst those of Bhojpur.

Table 3.18 ***Responses to the Item: Brothers in a* Baraka *Family Stop Eating Together, Meeting Each Other and Talking to Each Other While They Are Fighting***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	65 (22.0)	116 (39.3)	114 (38.6)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	12 (21.1)	39 (68.4)	6 (10.5)	—	—	57
	Parsa	73 (88.0)	9 (10.8)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	111 (91.7)	6 (5.0)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 3.19 contains the distribution of responses to the third item. It is obvious from this table that acute dissension in a *baraka* family is *frequently* followed by its partition in Mithila. In Bhojpur it happens very *seldom*. The response pattern in this table is similar to that of Table 3.18, that is, that the separatist or divisive tendency at the intra-family level is higher among the *baraka* families of Mithila than among those of Bhojpur. Partitioning of the family seems to be the typical intra-familial behaviour of *baraka* people of Mithila when dissension at the intra-family level becomes acute.

Table 3.19 ***Responses to the Item: Partition of a* Baraka *Family Takes Place Due to Acute Differences in the Family***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	121 (41.0)	128 (43.4)	46 (15.6)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	25 (43.9)	26 (45.6)	6 (10.5)	—	—	57
	Parsa	74 (89.2)	8 (9.6)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	108 (89.3)	11 (9.1)	—	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 3.20 presents the distribution of responses to the fourth item, *viz*.: Partition of the homestead/lands takes place in a *baraka* family even during the lifetime of the parents. It is clear from this table that during the lifetime of the parents, partition of the homestead/land in a *baraka* family seldom takes place.

Table 3.20 ***Responses to the Item: Partition of the Homestead/Lands Takes Place in a* Baraka *Family even During the Lifetime of Parents***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	63 (21.4)	156 (52.9)	76 (25.8)	—	—	295
	Khewali	19 (33.3)	30 (52.6)	8 (14.0)	—	—	57
	Parsa	—	74 (89.2)	8 (9.6)	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	22 (18.2)	96 (79.3)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Tables 3.17, 3.18, 3.19 and 3.20 indicate that intra-family dissension gives rise to *jhagra frequently* in a *baraka* family in Mithila. *Jhagra* here leads to insulation *frequently*, and partition of the family also *frequently* follows. The divisive or separatist trend at the intra-family level among the *baraka* families, thus, appears to be stronger in Mithila than in Bhojpur. However, partition of the homestead/lands is not *frequently* done as long as the parents are alive.

Styles of Conflict Resolution

Four items were included in the schedule regarding styles of conflict resolution:

1. Partition in a *baraka* family takes place by mutual consent without arbitration by *panches*.
2. Conflict (*jhagra*) in a *baraka* family is resolved only by the law courts.

3. Members of a *chhotaka/nanh* family resolve their conflict among themselves soon.
4. *Chhotaka/Nanh* families take their intra-family conflicts to law courts.

Table 3.21 contains the distribution of responses to the first item. It is obvious from this table that in a *baraka* family, partition is *frequently* done with the mutual consent of members. Outsiders are *seldom* invited for arbitration. This mode is followed in all the villages under study of both Mithila and Bhojpur. It seems that members of a *baraka* family do not like outsiders to know the assets and liabilities of their family. They consider it important to keep the family secrets intact. However, this trend appears to be more prominent in Mithila than in Bhojpur, as the table indicates.

Table 3.21 *Responses to the Item: Partition in a* **Baraka** *Family Takes Place by Mutual Consent Without Arbitration by* **Panches**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	166 (56.3)	97 (32.9)	32 (10.8)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	25 (43.9)	22 (38.6)	10 (17.5)	—	—	57
	Parsa	67 (80.7)	15 (18.1)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	92 (76.0)	17 (14.0)	10 (8.3)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 3.22 illustrates the distribution of responses to the second item. It is obvious from this table that intra-familial *jhagras* of *baraka* families *seldom* go to a court of law. It seems that the mode is to resolve intra-family conflict in a *baraka* family by negotiation and persuasion. However, as this table indicates, intra-familial conflict is seldom taken to a court of law.

Table 3.23 lists the distribution of responses to the third item. It is obvious from this table that *chhotaka/nanh* people resolve their intra-family conflict *frequently* among themselves quickly. In both Bhojpur and Mithila, this seems to be the typical method of intra-family conflict resolution among *chhotaka/nanh* people.

Table 3.24 contains the distribution of responses to the fourth

Table 3.22 ***Responses to the Item: Conflict in a*** **Baraka** ***Family is Resolved Only by the Law Courts***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	47 (15.9)	126 (42.7)	121 (41.0)	1 (0.3)	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	—	32 (56.1)	25 (43.9)	—	—	57
	Parsa	39 (47.0)	43 (51.8)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	12 (9.9)	105 (86.8)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 3.23 ***Responses to the Item: Members of a*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***Family Resolve their Conflicts among Themselves Soon***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	217 (73.6)	56 (19.0)	22 (7.5)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	53 (93.0)	3 (5.3)	1 (1.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	80 (96.4)	2 (2.4)	—	1 (1.8)	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	113 (93.4)	4 (3.3)	1 (0.8)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	121

item. It is clear from this table that seldom do the *chhotaka/nanh* people take their intra-family conflicts to courts of law for resolution.

Tables 3.21, 3.22, 3.23 and 3.24 refer to the modes of intra-family conflict resolution. Tables 3.21 and 3.22 present data for *baraka* families in this context while Tables 3.23 and 3.24 deal with *chhotaka/nanh* families. It is clear from these tables that both *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* people *seldom* approach the courts of law for the resolution of their intra-family conflicts. The latter resolve them *frequently* among themselves soon. Partition of a

Table 3.24 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***Take their Intra-Family Conflict to Law Courts***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	36 (12.2)	205 (69.5)	54 (18.3)	—	—	295
	Khewali	11 (19.3)	31 (54.4)	15 (26.3)	—	—	57
	Parsa	5 (6.0)	74 (89.2)	3 (3.6)	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	23 (19.0)	89 (73.6)	6 (5.0)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	121

baraka family is also frequently done amicably without inviting *panches* for arbitration.

Styles of Accommodation

Five items were included in the schedule regarding styles of accommodation. These are:

1. Traditionally attached old house servants of a *baraka* family are treated affectionately by its members.
2. Traditionally attached servants command the children in a *baraka* family.
3. Traditionally attached servants consider the dignity of their master's house as their own.
4. Members of a *baraka* family consider the dignity of traditionally attached servants as their own.
5. Traditionally attached house servants have to approach others in times of crisis.

Table 3.25 presents the distribution of responses to the first item. It is clear from this table that traditionally attached house servants are *frequently* treated affectionately in *baraka* families both in Bhojpur and in Mithila. However, this trend seems to be more pronounced in Mithila. Respondents saying that old house servants are treated affectionately in a *baraka* family have been found to be in majority even in Bhojpur (55.3 per cent at Chougain

Table 3.25 ***Responses to the Item: Traditionally Attached Old House Servants of a* Baraka *Family are Treated Affectionately by its Members***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	163 (55.3)	51 (17.3)	81 (27.5)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	26 (45.6)	16 (28.1)	4 (7.0)	11 (19.3)	—	57
	Parsa	80 (96.4)	2 (2.4)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	99 (81.8)	13 (10.7)	7 (5.8)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

and 45.6 per cent at Khewali). In Mithila, such respondents are in an overwhelming majority (96.4 per cent at Parsa and 81.8 per cent at Bhagwatipur). Therefore, one may suppose that this is more typical of *baraka* families of Mithila than those of Bhojpur.

Table 3.26 details the distribution of responses to the second item. It is clear from this table that in the satellite villages, old traditionally attached house servants *seldom* command the children in a *baraka* family. In the feeder villages, a majority of the respondents (40.3 per cent at Chougain and 86.0 per cent at Bhagwatipur) have been found to be of the opinion that old traditionally attached house servants *never* command the *baraka* family children. One may, thus, suppose that old traditionally attached house servants are not accorded the same status as that of elders in a *baraka* family.

Table 3.27 shows the distribution of responses to the third item. It is clear from this table that the old traditionally attached house servants frequently consider the dignity of their master's house as their own in all the villages under study. However, this consideration seems to be more typical of the house servants traditionally attached to a *baraka* family in Mithila (where an overwhelming number of respondents held this consideration to be *frequent*). Probably the sense of attachment to a *baraka* family among old house servants is stronger in Mithila than in Bhojpur.

Table 3.28 gives the distribution of responses to the fourth item. It is obvious from this table that the members of a *baraka* family consider the dignity of their old traditionally attached house

Table 3.26 ***Responses to the Item: Traditionally Attached Servants Command the Children in a* Baraka *Family***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	83 (28.1)	92 (31.2)	119 (40.3)	1 (0.3)	—	295
	Khewali	5 (8.8)	38 (66.7)	3 (5.3)	11 (19.3)	—	57
	Parsa	8 (9.6)	74 (89.2)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	8 (6.6)	7 (5.8)	104 (86.0)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 3.27 ***Responses to the Item: Traditionally Attached Servants Consider the Dignity of their Master's House as their Own***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	156 (52.5)	62 (21.0)	76 (25.8)	1 (0.3)	—	295
	Khewali	25 (43.9)	21 (36.8)	—	11 (19.3)	—	57
	Parsa	79 (95.2)	3 (3.6)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	100 (82.6)	10 (8.3)	9 (7.4)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

servants as their own. It seems that the members of a *baraka* family also reciprocate these feelings of their old traditionally attached house servants. In this context, again, the difference between Mithila and Bhojpur appears to be the same as was noted regarding the third item (see Table 3.27).

Table 3.29 presents the distribution of responses to the fifth item. It is clear from this table that the traditionally attached house servants of a *baraka* family *seldom* approach others in times of crisis. It seems that, generally, they are taken care of by the families to which they have remained attached for generations.

The data given in Tables 3.25, 3.26, 3.27, 3.28 and 3.29 indicate

Table 3.28 ***Responses to the Item: Members of a* Baraka *Family Consider the Dignity of Traditionally Attached Servants as Their Own***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	160 (54.2)	65 (22.0)	69 (23.4)	1 (0.3)	—	295
	Khewali	24 (42.1)	22 (38.6)	—	11 (19.3)	—	57
	Parsa	78 (94.0)	2 (2.4)	2 (2.4)	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	101 (83.5)	9 (7.4)	9 (7.4)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 3.29 ***Responses to the Item: Traditionally Attached House Servants Have to Approach Others for Help in Times of Crisis***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	45 (15.3)	182 (61.7)	68 (23.1)	—	—	295
	Khewali	5 (8.8)	23 (40.4)	18 (31.6)	11 (19.3)	—	57
	Parsa	2 (2.4)	78 (94.0)	2 (2.4)	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	10 (8.2)	103 (85.1)	6 (5.0)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

that accommodating *chhotaka/nanh* men within the *baraka* families is fairly institutionalised. They are treated affectionately. They identify their prestige with the prestige of the family to which they are attached. In this context, their behaviour is reciprocated by the behaviour of their master and others of the *baraka* family. At the same time, they are even materially supported by their masters. Only *seldom* do they have to approach others for help in times of crisis.

These are the typical ways in which accommodation of *chhotaka/nanh* men in a *baraka* family operate in day-to-day life. However, as noted before, the attachment of the former to the *baraka* family in this context seems to be stronger in Mithila than in Bhojpur.

Summary and Discussion

The data presented in Tables 3.1 to 3.29 refer to the typical behaviour patterns in relation to the different roles in both *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* families region and village-wise. The behaviour patterns in *baraka* families seem to be different from those of *chhotaka/nanh* families. A summary of the findings mentioned earlier in respect of both *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* families follows.

Baraka Families

Norms of Etiquette

Norms of etiquette followed in the *baraka* families seem to vary from Bhojpur to Mithila. In the latter, the use of honorific forms of address for both seniors and juniors has been found to be modal.[2] In Bhojpur, such forms of address, though in use, have not been observed to be typical of *baraka* families of the satellite village dominated by non-upper castes. However, in both the regions, using self-restraint or maintaining discipline by juniors when conversing with their seniors has been observed to be their typical behaviour. This norm has a long tradition behind it. In an analysis of the ancient Indian texts, Prabhati Mukherjee (1980, p. 10) marked this as one of the dominant norms of interpersonal relationship between seniors and juniors in a family. A late seventeenth century document entitled *Hidayatul Quwaid* also prescribes it as desirable in the same context (Ahmed, 1981–82, p. 23). A similar view has been expressed in *Bihar Darpan* published in the late nineteenth century.[3] Since Mithila has remained a prominent

[2] In Mithila, it seems, the use of honorific forms of address for both seniors and juniors has a long tradition. Vidyapati, the famous Maithili poet of the fifteenth century, has described such norms of etiquette in his book *Likhanavali*. See Indra Kant Jha, 1969, pp. 5–6.

[3] This book was written in Hindi by Babu Ram Deen Singh. Its second edition was brought out by the Khadga Vilas Press of Bankipur, Patna, in 1888. It was written at the instance of Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya, the then Inspector of Schools, for the education of school-going students in Bihar. It is a collection of biographical sketches of twenty-four Biharis who, according to Babu Ram Deen Singh, could inspire the best spirit of Indian tradition among the students. The norms of etiquette enunciated in this book becomc quite meaningful in the context of their continuity today.

seat of tradition in India, the intra-familial superior-subordinate relationships are more formal and deferential here than in Bhojpur.

Patterns of Living

Maintaining privacy has been observed to be typical of the members of *baraka* families in both Bhojpur and Mithila. However, in the latter region, the trend appears to be more pronounced than in Bhojpur. Besides, in the villages having predominantly upper caste groups among the *baraka* people, the *purdah* system has been found to be strictly observed in the intra-familial living pattern. It seems that the preference for privacy is more pronounced among the *baraka* families belonging to the upper caste groups. In Mithila, where brahmanic orthodoxy has remained dominant since ancient days, observation of privacy in day-to-day life seems to be much more institutionalised among the *baraka* families of upper caste groups than among those of Bhojpur.

Styles of Conflict

Answering elders back has not been found to be the typical behaviour of juniors in a *baraka* family. In the village where *baraka* families are not predominantly upper caste, the juniors in the *baraka* families *seldom* answer their elders back when they dissent. In the villages where the layer of *baraka* people is dominated by upper castes, *never* answering the elders back has been observed to be typical of juniors. This norm of *never* answering elders back, it seems, is correlated with caste hierarchy. Therefore, in Mithila, it appears to be stronger than in Bhojpur. Perhaps, due to the dominance of brahmanic orthodoxy in Mithila, the intra-familial hierarchy seems to be more pronounced here than in Bhojpur. The juniors protest *frequently* in Mithila by resorting to indirect means, i.e., by refusing to eat food or by refusing to talk to anyone in the family. In Bhojpur, this has not been observed to be the typical way of protesting. Here, it would seem that the juniors protest directly within the family. This is corroborated by the findings concerning the exchange of abuses/blows among the members in the *baraka* families of Bhojpur and Mithila. In Bhojpur, seldom occurence of this behaviour has been found to be the mode

whereas in Mithila the mode is that this behaviour *never* occurs. This suggests that even members of *baraka* families in Bhojpur tend to resort to violence when they dissent among themselves. But this is not so in Mithila. This, again, indicates that the intra-familial hierarchy among the *baraka* families is much more prominent in everyday life in Mithila than among the *baraka* families in Bhojpur.

Consequences of Conflict

The data in this context reveal differences in intra-familial behaviour patterns in Mithila and Bhojpur. In Mithila, acute dissension in a *baraka* family gives rise to *jhagra* (serious conflict) *frequently*. *Jhagra* leads to insulation or isolation of the members being party to it frequently. Partition of the family follows *frequently*. In Bhojpur, the occurrence of *jhagra* has not been found to be typical of *baraka* families in spite of dissension. Even in the case of *jhagra*, isolating oneself is not the modal reaction of a member being party to it here. Partitioning of the family is also not the typical reaction of members having acute dissension in the family. It seems that the intra-familial relationships among *baraka* families are more communal and informal in Bhojpur than in Mithila. In Mithila, the divisive trend among *baraka* families appears to be quite strong. However, during the lifetime of parents, partitioning of the homestead/lands is not frequently done even in Mithila. Here, division among the brothers has been considered desirable and legitimate from the religious point of view for long. The Mithila school of *Dharmashastra* recommends this as a matter of merit (Govind Jha, 1976, p. 93; Pandit Ramkrishna Jha, 1931, p. 69). Since Mithila has remained an important seat of brahmanic orthodoxy for ages, it is no wonder that partition of the family among brothers is valued here, particularly among the *baraka* people.

Styles of Conflict Resolution

The data in this context indicate that intra-family conflict is frequently resolved by the members of the family themselves in the *baraka* group. For example, in the case of partition of the family, the members *seldom* invite outsiders (as *panches*) for arbitration. They resolve it among themselves *frequently*. This appears to be more typical of *baraka* families of Mithila than of those of Bhojpur.

Perhaps, the *baraka* people of Mithila do not consider it desirable to allow outsiders to know the assets and liabilities of their families. It seems that the consideration of *family privacy* is held to be more important in Mithila than in Bhojpur. However, in both Bhojpur and Mithila, they *seldom* approach the law courts to resolve their intra-family conflict. Using law courts in this context has not been found to be typical. However, *never* approaching the law courts is not the modal way of intra-family conflict resolution either. It seems that in those cases in which very intricate land rights are involved, the law courts are approached for the resolution of intra-family conflicts. In Mithila, this trend seems to be greater than in Bhojpur.

Chhotaka/Nanh Families

Norms of Etiquette

In a *chhotaka/nanh* family, seniors are not addressed honorifically. In both Bhojpur and Mithila, this pattern has been found to be typical. However, regional variations seem to affect the practice of having two or three or even more names for a member of the family. Generally, this has been the tradition among *baraka* families in both Bhojpur and Mithila. In Bhojpur, even in *chhotaka/nanh* families, members seldom have more than one name. *Never* having more than one name has been found to be the mode of naming in *chhotaka/nanh* families in Mithila but not in Bhojpur. Thus, in respect of both—use of honorific addresses for seniors and patterns of naming the members—intra-family behaviour of *chhotaka/nanh* people appears to be fairly close to that of *baraka* people in Bhojpur. This is not so in Mithila, where intra-family behaviour of *chhotaka/nanh* people has been found to be quite different from that of *baraka* people in the context of the use of honorific addresses for seniors and the pattern of naming the members. One may, therefore, suppose that society in Bhojpur is more egalitarian in nature than in Mithila.

In the context of addressing junior members of the family, *chhotaka/nanh* people vulgarise the names of juniors in both Mithila and Bhojpur frequently. In Mithila, the intra-family behaviour of *chhotaka/nanh* people seems to be entirely different from that of *baraka* people in this context as well. *Baraka* people

here, as mentioned before, use honorific forms of address even for juniors in the family. Further, abusive words have been observed to be *seldom* used in both Bhojpur and Mithila in *chhotaka/nanh* families. In this context, perhaps, the intra-family behaviour of *chhotaka/nanh* people differs from that of *baraka* people even in Bhojpur.

Patterns of Living

In this context, the intra-family behaviour of *chhotaka/nanh* people seems to be quite different from that of *baraka* people. In both Mithila and Bhojpur, members of *chhotaka/nanh* families have been observed to be together frequently either at work or at leisure. In this context, the difference between feeder villages and satellite ones has been found to be important. In the former, passing time together has not been observed to be typical of *chhotaka/nanh* families. But, in the latter, in both Mithila and Bhojpur, it has been observed to be typical. The feeder villages are relatively more heterogeneous and the members of the *chhotaka/nanh* family may have different occupations. Satellite villages are relatively homogeneous, with agriculture as practically the sole occupation. Thus, all the working members of a family having the same occupation might be working together. Since satellite villages are in an overwhelming number both in Bhojpur and Mithila, the styles prevailing among them may be taken to be typical of the region as a whole. Unlike *baraka* families, they have no consideration for privacy in their everyday life. However, taking intoxicating drinks together has not been found to be typical of them anywhere.[4] Perhaps, this habit does not form part of intra-family activity. Generally, intoxicating drinks are taken in peer group gatherings.

It seems that the living pattern followed in a *chhotaka/nanh* family is communal in nature whereas the preference for privacy marks the day-to-day living style of *baraka* families. This preference appears to be more pronounced among *baraka* families belonging to upper caste groups of both the regions in general.

[4] At the time of qualitative data collection, old people of the villages studied reported that taking intoxicants had been traditionally considered undesirable for all. However, among the *chhotaka/nanh* people, it was not observed as a taboo.

Styles of Conflict

In *chhotaka/nanh* families, answering elders back has been found to be typical of juniors when they have conflict among themselves both in Mithila and Bhojpur. Besides, exchanging abuses/blows between even father and son has been observed to be the modal style of intra-familial conflict behaviour among *chhotaka/nanh* people. Feelings of protest or anger are overtly expressed and even crudely displayed in inter-personal situations. In this context, their behaviour pattern is different from that of *baraka* people. Among the latter, as noted before, these behaviour patterns have not been found to be typical either in Mithila or in Bhojpur. Intra-familial hierarchy, thus, does not seem to prevail among *chhotaka/nanh* people or, in other words, the communal nature dominates the pattern of their intra-family living.

Styles of Conflict Resolution

Resolving intra-family conflict has been observed to be typical among *chhotaka/nanh* families in both Bhojpur and Mithila. This has also been found to be typical of *baraka* people. What appears to be significant in the case of *chhotaka/nanh* people, however, is that they resolve their intra-family conflict *soon*. Perhaps, their communal living pattern compels them to settle the issue soon. They cannot afford to wait for days and weeks to resolve their intra-familial conflict. Therefore, it seems, they seldom go to law courts.

Accommodation of Chhotaka/Nanh in a Baraka Family

There is only one role through which a *chhotaka/nanh* person enters a *baraka* family, and that is the role of house-servant (*khawas* or *noukar*). A house-servant is considered to be a part of the family. This study focuses on a particular kind of house-servant—old and traditionally attached. The assumption is that an old servant, who has himself served a house for long and whose family has had this relationship with the house since generations, should have highly institutionalised accommodation in the house of *baraka* family. We shall illustrate some of the typical features of this accommodation here.

Treating old and traditionally attached servants *affectionately* has been found to be typical of the members of *baraka* families in both Mithila and Bhojpur. However, in Mithila, this practice is stronger than in Bhojpur. House-servants seem to reciprocate this treatment of the members of their masters' families by considering their dignity and prestige as their own frequently. Again, this tendency has been observed to be more typical of household servants in Mithila than those of Bhojpur. Members of *baraka* families, it seems, also take care of the dignity of their house-servants, considering it a part of their own dignity. The identity of a house-servant appears to be derived from that of the house to which he is attached. The sense of mutual attachment (possibly due to tradition) with each other seems to be the basis of their relationship. This mutual attachment appears to be stronger in Mithila than in Bhojpur.

In Mithila, in a *baraka* family, each male member tends to have privacy in day-to-day life within even the intra-family setting, as discussed before. In that case, it seems, he becomes dependent on the house-servant for his personal services. Possibly this makes the attachment between them quite strong. This is perhaps the reason why an old and traditionally attached house-servant's needs are also generally taken care of as he *seldom* has to approach others for help in times of crisis. Patronage is thus extended to him for the services rendered. However, he is not accorded the status of an elder member of the family, and he *seldom* commands the children. In this context, the difference between satellite and feeder villages has been observed to be significant. In the latter, he *never* commands the children whereas in the satellite villages, he does so *seldom*. Satellite villages appear to be more traditional than the feeder ones. Since old age is traditionally valued, it seems that the members of *baraka* families of satellite villages do not mind if their old and traditionally attached house-servants command their children *seldom*. However, as commanding children has not been observed to be their typical activity in either satellite or feeder villages of the regions under study, it can be supposed that they are not accorded the same status as that of the elder members/relations of *baraka* families.

FOUR

Baraka *and* Chhotaka/Nanh *Relationships*

Village life in India is marked by inequality. However, understanding village-level inequality in terms of *hierarchy* is considered to be more appropriate than doing so in terms of stratification (Beteille, 1986, p. 60). According to Beteille, 'Generally, the villager thinks only of his own limited social universe and of the divisions within it' (*ibid*., p. 49). The relations among the divisions within the village 'continue to be governed . . . by the traditional marks of deference' (*ibid*., p. 66). The traditional marks of deference ruling the village universe relate more to the personal order characterised by hierarchy than to the impersonal network based on stratification (*ibid*., p. 60). In this study, I have focused on the relations within and between the institutionalised layers (that is, of *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh*) constituting the hierarchy that the villagers themselves think of.

In this context, the issues in relation to which the typical behaviour patterns have been studied are: norms of etiquette; conflict; conflict resolution; cause of conflict; value of conflict; consequences of conflict; manipulation of conflict; exploitation, coercion; and patronage.

Norms of Etiquette

The items included in the schedule regarding norms of etiquette are listed below.

1. Some people of the non-*baraka* category always remain in the company of *baraka* men, addressing them as *sarkar*/*huzoor*.
2. Those sitting with a *baraka* man flatter him.
3. They flatter anyone who is a *baraka* man in the village.
4. *Baraka* men and those intimately connected with them sit on chairs/*gaddis* and the rest sit on the ground.
5. People of the non-*baraka* category go to a *baraka* man and pay their respects (or do *darbar*) only when they are in need of his help.
6. They generally do *darbar* before him as long as they are served with tea/food, and so on.
7. *Baraka* men address the *chhotaka/nanh* as *re/be* and by vulgarising their names.
8. *Baraka* men also abuse *chhotaka/nanh* while addressing them.

We shall now deal item-wise with the analyses of the data gathered from the villages under study.

Table 4.1 illustrates the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the first item. It is obvious from this table that in Mithila, in both the villages, *baraka* men are addressed as *sarkar* and *huzoor* by those of the non-*baraka* category who come and sit with them. In Bhojpur, this pattern of behaviour with *baraka* men has been observed to be followed only at Chougain. At Khewali, the modal response (45.6 per cent) in this context is that the *baraka* men are *never* addressed as *sarkar* and *huzoor* by those who come and sit with them. The number of respondents (40.4 per cent) saying that *seldom* does such a behaviour occur with *baraka* men is not significantly different from that of the modal response ($X^2 = 0.18$, not significant at the 95 per cent significance level). So, one may at best suppose that at Khewali, *baraka* men are *seldom* addressed as *sarkar* and *huzoor* by those who come and sit with them. Khewali is a satellite village which represents the most numerous category of villages in Bhojpur. Chougain is a feeder village. Its *baraka* layer is dominated by upper caste families who had extensive *zamindaris* in the region before *zamindari* was abolished in 1953 in Bihar.

The situation at Chougain, therefore, cannot be presumed to be typical of the villages in Bhojpur. The behaviour pattern observed

Table 4.1 ***Responses to the Item: Some Non-Baraka People Always Remain in the Company of Baraka Men, Addressing them as Sarkar/Huzoor***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	253 (85.8)	30 (10.2)	12 (4.1)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	8 (14.0)	23 (40.4)	26 (45.6)	—	—	57
	Parsa	66 (79.5)	17 (20.5)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	119 (98.3)	—	—	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

in Khewali (which represents a large number of villages) may be considered to be typical of Bhojpur. One may, thus, infer that in Bhojpur *baraka* men are not generally addressed as *sarkar* and *huzoor*. In Mithila, however, addressing *baraka* men by these terms is typical. It indicates that hierarchy is much more pronounced in Mithila than in Bhojpur.

Table 4.2 presents the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the second item. The pattern of responses indicated by this table is similar to that of Table 4.1. Flattery seems to be a typical way of interacting with *baraka* men in Mithila, which is not so in Bhojpur.

Table 4.2 ***Responses to the Item: Those Sitting with a Baraka Man Flatter Him***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	245 (83.1)	43 (14.6)	7 (2.4)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	8 (14.0)	24 (42.1)	25 (43.9)	—	—	57
	Parsa	57 (68.7)	25 (30.1)	1 (1.2)	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	119 (98.3)	—	—	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 4.3 contains the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the third item. It is obvious from this table that *baraka* men in general are flattered when interacting with other people in Mithila. In Bhojpur, the difference in the pattern of responses between Chougain and Khewali is the same as noted in Table 4.1. Here, flattering *baraka* men does not appear to be a typical style of interaction. In Mithila it has been observed to be typical.

Table 4.3 ***Responses to the Item: Non-*Baraka *People Flatter Anyone Who is a* Baraka *Man in the Village***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	197 (66.8)	77 (26.1)	21 (7.1)	—	—	295
	Khewali	8 (14.0)	24 (42.1)	25 (43.9)	—	—	57
	Parsa	53 (63.9)	29 (34.9)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	119 (98.3)	—	—	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 4.4 presents the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the fourth item. It is obvious from this table that when people of the non-*baraka* category come to meet *baraka* men, they sit on the ground; the latter and their intimate friends or relatives sit on chairs or *gaddis*. This resembles a court (or *darbar*) like situation. It seems that the manners of *darbar* that used to be held by big *zamindars* before independence in Bihar percolated down to the village level and are still considered by the people to be a typical way of conducting themselves in the presence of *baraka* men. However, as the data given in this table indicate, this *darbar*-like conduct is more typical of the villagers of Mithila than those of Bhojpur.

The data regarding the first four items (Tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4) indicate how people of the non-*baraka* category behave with *baraka* men. Table 4.5 illustrates the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the fifth item, suggesting *why* people

Table 4.4 *Responses to the Item:* **Baraka** *Men and Those Intimately Connected with them Sit on Chairs/***Gaddis** *and the Rest on the Ground*

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	214 (72.5)	43 (14.6)	38 (12.9)	—	—	295
Bhojpur	Khewali	28 (49.1)	19 (33.3)	10 (17.5)	—	—	57
	Parsa	80 (96.4)	3 (3.6)	—	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	117 (96.7)	2 (1.7)	—	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 4.5 *Responses to the Item: People of the Non-***Baraka** *Category Go to a* **Baraka** *Man and do* **Darbar** *Only when they are in Need of his Help*

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	174 (59.0)	99 (33.6)	22 (7.5)	—	—	295
Bhojpur	Khewali	11 (19.3)	38 (66.7)	8 (14.0)	—	—	57
	Parsa	62 (74.7)	21 (25.3)	—	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	112 (92.6)	6 (5.0)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

behave in this manner with *baraka* men. It is obvious from this table that only when a person belonging to the non-*baraka* category is in need of help from a *baraka* man does he go to him and do *darbar*.

It seems that it is self-interest (not loyalty) which drives a person to a *baraka* man to do *darbar*. In Mithila, self-interest appears to be the typical consideration in this context. In Bhojpur, responses at Chougain also indicate the same phenomenon. At Khewali, the *darbari* style of behaviour has not been observed except in the context of the fourth item (Table 4.4). In Bhojpur, doing *darbar* seems to be limited to the feeder villages having upper caste

households at the *baraka* level which had extensive *zamindaris* before. In such villages today, self-interest appears to be the typical factor behind this pattern of activity of the non-*baraka* people in relation to *baraka* men, as has been observed in Mithila.

Table 4.6 contains the distribution of responses to the sixth item, which relates to the same aspect of *darbari* behaviour as the fifth item (Table 4.5). It is obvious from this table that people do *darbar* even for short-term petty gains. In Mithila, this has been found to be a typical practice. In Bhojpur, again, this seems to be limited to a few villages of the feeder type with erstwhile *zamindar* houses of upper caste groups, as has been observed in the context of the fifth item (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.6 ***Responses to the Item: People of the Non-*Baraka *Category Generally do* Darbar *Before a* Baraka *Man as Long as they are Served Tea or Food***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	184 (62.4)	77 (26.1)	33 (11.2)	1 (0.3)	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	3 (5.3)	18 (31.6)	36 (63.2)	—	—	57
	Parsa	54 (65.2)	29 (34.9)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	119 (98.3)	—	—	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Considering the pattern of responses to these two items given in Table 4.5 and Table 4.6, one may suppose that even short-term self-interest can generally drive one to do *darbar* in Mithila. In Bhojpur, however, it has limited appeal, as shown earlier.

Table 4.7 presents the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the seventh item. This item relates to the style of speech behaviour of a *baraka* man in relation to *chhotaka/nanh*. It is obvious from this table that addressing *chhotaka/nanh* disrespectfully is typical of *baraka* people in Mithila. In Bhojpur, this behaviour appears to be modal in both Chougain and Khewali. At Khewali, however, the number of responses in this context is not significantly different from those indicating that this behaviour of *baraka* men occurs *seldom*. Therefore, it is difficult to presume it

Table 4.7 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Baraka** ***Men Address*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***as*** **Re/Be** ***and Vulgarise their Names***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	168 (56.9)	91 (30.8)	36 (12.2)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	21 (36.8)	20 (35.1)	16 (28.1)	—	—	57
	Parsa	80 (96.4)	3 (3.6)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	116 (95.9)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

to be typical of *baraka* men in Bhojpur, although in feeder villages having old *zamindar* households of upper caste groups at the *baraka* level, it might be held to be so.

Table 4.8 details the distribution of responses to the eighth item. Like the previous item (see Table 4.7), this item also relates to the speech behaviour of *baraka* in relation to *chhotaka/nanh*. It is obvious from this table that the *baraka* people seldom abuse *chhotaka/nanh* while addressing them. Abusing *chhotaka/nanh* has not been found to be typical behaviour either in Mithila or Bhojpur. However, as this table indicates, the use of abusive terms for *chhotaka/nanh* by *baraka* people cannot be completely ruled out. The former are addressed by such terms occasionally.

Tables 4.1–4.8 refer to the styles of behaviour in the context of norms of etiquette between *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* . The first four tables (Tables 4.1–4.4) relate to the ways in which non-*baraka* people behave with *baraka* men. As mentioned before, *baraka* men are addressed as *huzoor/sarkar*. They are flattered by those who come and sit with them. In Mithila, this has been found to be typical in both the villages under study. In Bhojpur, this practice seems to be limited to the feeder villages dominated by old *zamindar* households of upper caste groups. Generally, as far as speech behaviour is concerned, in Bhojpur the *darbari* style of old days is not adopted in a large number of villages when interacting with the *baraka* men. However, as far as the manners regarding sitting with the latter are concerned, the *darbari* style operates both in Mithila and Bhojpur. It seems that this style is much more pronounced in

Table 4.8 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Baraka** ***Men Abuse*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***while Addressing Them***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	46 (15.6)	183 (62.0)	66 (22.4)	—	—	295
	Khewali	8 (14.0)	39 (68.4)	10 (17.5)	—	—	57
	Parsa	17 (20.5)	65 (78.3)	1 (1.2)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	11 (9.1)	105 (86.8)	3 (2.5)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Mithila than in Bhojpur. In other words, one may suppose that hierarchy is much more institutionalised in Mithila than in Bhojpur.

Table 4.5 and Table 4.6 make it clear that people resort to the *darbari* style of behaviour even for their petty self-interests. Tables 4.7 and 4.8 refer to the speech behaviour of *baraka* towards *chhotaka/nanh*. It is obvious from these two tables, as mentioned before, that in Mithila *chhotaka/nanh* people are, as a rule, disrespectfully addressed by the *baraka* men, but this is not so in Bhojpur.

Conflict

The items included in the schedule regarding conflict were:

1. *Baraka* men, though pretending to be in harmony at the overt level, constantly intrigue against each other.
2. *Chhotaka/nanh* also engage in jockeying against each other.
3. *Chhotaka/nanh* people abuse/assault each other in case of acute differences among themselves.

Table 4.9 details the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the first item. This item relates to the style of conflict among *baraka* men. It is obvious from this table that intriguing against each other in the village is the typical style of conflict

Table 4.9 ***Responses to the Item:* Baraka *Men Overtly Appear to be in Harmony but Covertly Constantly Intrigue Against each Other***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	213 (72.2)	48 (16.3)	34 (11.5)	—	—	295
	Khewali	36 (63.2)	12 (21.1)	9 (15.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	78 (94.0)	5 (6.0)	—	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	118 (97.5)	1 (0.8)	—	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

among *baraka* people, both in Bhojpur and Mithila. Overtly, they seem to be in harmony with each other. They sit together and talk to each other in a manner that generally does not reflect their inner feelings to each other. However, they appear to be pulling each other's legs covertly.

Table 4.10 presents the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the second item. This relates to the style of conflict among the *chhotaka/nanh*. It is obvious from this table that intriguing against each other is not the style of conflict among the *chhotaka/nanh*. In Bhojpur, however, the modal response in this context is not significantly different from those saying that such a style of conflict is *seldom* adopted by the *chhotaka/nanh* (for Chougain, $X^2 = 0.37$, and for Khewali, $X^2 = 0.20$). One may, therefore, suppose that in Bhojpur, *chhotaka/nanh seldom* adopt the style of conflict typical of *baraka* people. In Mithila, it is *never* adopted by them. In any case, this style of conflict has not been observed to be typical of *chhotaka/nanh* either in Bhojpur or in Mithila.

Table 4.11 contains the distribution of responses to the third item. This item, like the previous one (see Table 4.10), is also related to the pattern of conflict among the *chhotaka/nanh*. It is obvious from this table that the conflict among the *chhotaka/nanh* is always overt. Abusing and/or assaulting each other is their typical style of behaviour when they have acute dissension among themselves.

Thus, the behaviour pattern of *baraka* people in this context is

Table 4.10 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***also Jockey Against Each Other***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	29 (9.8)	128 (43.4)	138 (46.8)	—	—	295
Bhojpur	Khewali	14 (24.6)	20 (35.1)	23 (40.4)	—	—	57
	Parsa	3 (3.6)	6 (7.2)	74 (89.2)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	2 (1.7)	5 (4.1)	112 (92.6)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 4.11 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***People Abuse/Assault Each Other in Case of Acute Differences***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	173 (58.6)	97 (32.9)	25 (8.5)	—	—	295
Bhojpur	Khewali	43 (75.4)	7 (12.3)	7 (12.3)	—	—	57
	Parsa	75 (90.3)	5 (6.0)	3 (3.6)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	71 (58.7)	48 (39.7)	—	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

entirely different from that of the *chhotaka/nanh* in both Bhojpur and Mithila. Conflict at the upper (*baraka*) level is generally not visible on the surface. However, covertly they remain constantly engaged in intrigue against each other to establish personal supremacy. *Chhotaka/nanh*, on the contrary, manifest their differences rather crudely.

Conflict Resolution

A few items were included in the schedule regarding conflict resolution. These were:

1. Conflicts of *baraka* people are resolved only by a court of law.
2. *Chhotaka/nanh* resolve their conflicts quickly among themselves.
3. *Chhotaka/nanh* also approach law courts to resolve their conflicts.

Table 4.12 presents the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the first item which relates to the pattern of conflict resolution at the level of *baraka* people. It is obvious from this table that the modal response at each village is that the conflicts (*jhagra*) of *baraka* people are frequently resolved by law courts. This has been found to differ significantly from the responses under the head 'Seldom' for Chougain and Bhagwatipur—the feeder villages of Bhojpur and Mithila respectively. At the satellite villages, the above response, though modal, does not differ significantly from that saying that the conflicts of *baraka* people are seldom resolved by the court of law (for Khewali, X^2 [for *F* and *S*] = 0.07, and for Parsa = 0.04). One may, therefore, suppose that litigation as a mode of conflict resolution is favoured more by the *baraka* men of feeder villages than those of the satellite villages.

Table 4.12 ***Responses to the Item: Conflicts of* Baraka *People are Resolved Only by the Law Courts***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	120 (40.7)	90 (30.5)	84 (28.5)	1 (0.3)	—	295
	Khewali	28 (49.1)	26 (45.6)	3 (5.3)	—	—	57
	Parsa	42 (50.6)	40 (48.2)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	91 (75.2)	25 (20.7)	2 (1.7)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 4.13 details the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the second item. This item relates to the pattern of conflict resolution of the *chhotaka/nanh*. It is obvious from this table that it is typical of the *chhotaka/nanh* to resolve their conflicts themselves soon both in Bhojpur and Mithila.

Table 4.13 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***Resolve their Conflicts Quickly Among Themselves***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	247 (83.7)	44 (14.9)	4 (1.4)	—	—	295
	Khewali	49 (86.0)	1 (1.8)	6 (10.5)	1 (1.8)	—	57
	Parsa	82 (98.8)	—	1 (1.2)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	118 (97.5)	1 (0.8)	—	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 4.14 illustrates the distribution of responses to the third item. This item, like the previous one (see Table 4.13), also relates to the pattern of conflict resolution of the *chhotaka/nanh*. This table indicates clearly that they *never* approach the law courts to resolve their conflicts. This supports the findings of Table 4.13, according to which the *chhotaka/nanh* quickly resolve their differences themselves. This indicates that they favour conflict resolution by *panchayati* means.

It seems that, in the context of the pattern of conflict resolution, the behaviour of *baraka* people is significantly different from that of the *chhotaka/nanh*. The former seem to believe in the efficacy

Table 4.14 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***also Approach the Courts of Law for Resolving their Conflicts***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	26 (8.8)	94 (31.9)	175 (59.3)	—	—	295
	Khewali	1 (1.8)	12 (21.1)	43 (75.4)	1 (1.8)	—	57
	Parsa	1 (1.2)	8 (9.6)	74 (89.2)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur		2 (1.7)	117 (96.7)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

of the *kachehri* in this context. The latter, however, generally never approach the courts of law. Instead, they resort to their own *panchayat*. The *kachehri* style of conflict resolution is time-consuming and also involves heavy expenditure in terms of money. The *panchayati* style not only resolves conflict but makes compromise smooth and easy without involving any time or money. The *kachehri* generally prolongs a conflict for a long time before finally resolving it. The resolution does not necessarily result in a compromise. Thus, one may suppose that the degree of unity among the *chhotaka/nanh* should be much greater than that among the *baraka* people.

Cause of Conflict

One item was included in the schedule in this context: *Baraka* people remain engaged in intrigues against each other for *personal supremacy*.

Table 4.15 presents the distribution of responses to the above item, region and village-wise. It is clear from this table that the modal response in this context at each village is that intrigues by *baraka* people against each other take place *frequently* for personal supremacy. In Bhojpur, this response, though modal, does not differ significantly from the response saying that *seldom* do *baraka* people jockey for personal supremacy (for Chougain, X^2 [*F* and

Table 4.15 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Baraka** ***People Remain Engaged in Intrigues Against Each Other for Personal Supremacy***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	119 (40.3)	112 (38.0)	64 (21.7)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	27 (47.4)	21 (36.8)	9 (15.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	61 (73.5)	20 (24.1)	1 (1.2)	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	106 (87.6)	11 (9.1)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

S] = 0.21 and for Khewali = 0.74). As indicated in Table 4.9, indulging in intrigues constantly against each other has been found to be the typical conflict behaviour of *baraka* people of Bhojpur as well. It seems that in Bhojpur, other issues besides the issue of personal supremacy (which, of course, has been found to be a modal issue) also might be considered important by *baraka* people for conspiring against each other. In Mithila, however, this appears to be the dominant issue in this context.

Value of Conflict

The items included in the schedule regarding the value of conflict were:

1. The extent to which a *baraka* man does not back out from conflict indicates his prestige.
2. Conflicts of *baraka* people are a part of their family heritage.

Table 4.16 contains the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the first item. It is obvious from this table that the modal response in this context for each village is that *seldom* does the prolonged involvement in conflict indicate the prestige of the parties (*baraka*) to it. This suggests that conflict as such is not valued by even *baraka* people who are *frequently* jockeying with each other.

Table 4.16 ***Responses to the Item: The Extent to which a* Baraka *Man does not Back Out from Conflict Indicates his Prestige***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	89 (30.2)	106 (35.9)	99 (33.6)	1 (0.3)	—	295
	Khewali	8 (14.0)	30 (52.6)	19 (33.3)	—	—	57
	Parsa	26 (31.3)	55 (66.3)	1 (1.2)	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	11 (9.1)	76 (62.8)	24 (19.8)	9 (7.4)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 4.17 illustrates the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the second item. It is clear from this table that the modal response in this context for each village is that *seldom* does conflict become a part of a *baraka* man's family heritage. It is not typical for conflict among *baraka* men to be part of their family heritage. However, this happens at times.

Table 4.17 ***Responses to the Item: Conflicts of*** **Baraka** ***People are a Part of their Family Heritage***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	79 (26.8)	176 (59.7)	38 (12.9)	2 (0.7)	—	295
	Khewali	10 (17.5)	24 (42.1)	23 (40.4)	—	—	57
	Parsa	9 (10.8)	74 (89.2)	—	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	8 (6.6)	112 (92.6)			1 (0.8)	121

Thus, the findings of both of these tables (4.16 and 4.17) make it clear that conflict of the kind typical of *baraka* people (such as intriguing against each other) is not valued either in Bhojpur or Mithila.

Consequence of Conflict

The items included in the schedule regarding the consequence of conflict were the following:

1. *Baraka* men severe all relations (such as talking to each other and eating together) with each other when they have acute differences.
2. Conflict of *baraka* people on one issue leads to conflict on other issues.

Table 4.18 contains the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the first item. It is clear from this table that in Mithila,

Table 4.18 ***Responses to the Item:* Baraka *Men Severe all Relations Among Themselves when they have Acute Differences***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	89 (30.2)	146 (49.5)	60 (20.3)	—	—	295
	Khewali	2 (3.5)	48 (84.2)	7 (12.3)	—	—	57
	Parsa	76 (91.6)	6 (7.2)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	111 (91.7)	6 (5.4)	1 (0.8)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	121

it is typical of *baraka* people to severe all connections among themselves when they are in conflict (*jhagra*). The conflicting parties virtually insulate themselves and all communications between them cease. In Bhojpur, the modal response in this context is that this happens *seldom*.

Baraka people here maintain communication links in spite of conflict. Conflict among *baraka* people in Mithila, it seems, tends to insulate them from each other superseding all links of direct communication among them. This tendency has been found to be dominant even in the context of intra-familial conflict among *baraka* people in Mithila (Table 3.18). It seems that the separatist tendency here is very strong among them. However, in Bhojpur, it has not been found to be typical. Conflict *seldom* leads to a loss of communication here.

Table 4.19 has the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the second item. The data in this table make it clear that the modal response in this context in each village is that conflict among the *baraka* people has a spread-effect. In Mithila, this trend seems to be quite typical and stronger than in Bhojpur. In Mithila, conflict leads to insulation (Table 4.18) which possibly makes the parties in conflict more vulnerable to misunderstanding. And this might give rise to conflict on other issues also. In Bhojpur, direct communication between the parties in conflict is not generally lost and, therefore, the spread-effect of conflict on any issue is relatively controlled. However, one may suppose that conflict by nature tends to spread from one issue to another.

Table 4.19 ***Responses to the Item: Conflict of* Baraka *People on One Issue Leads to Conflict on Other Issues***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	138 (46.8)	95 (32.2)	62 (21.0)	—	—	295
	Khewali	24 (42.1)	18 (31.6)	15 (26.3)	—	—	57
	Parsa	59 (71.1)	23 (27.7)	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	96 (79.3)	20 (16.5)	2 (1.7)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	121

Manipulation of Conflict

The items included in the schedule in the context of manipulation of conflict were:

1. Conflicting parties among the *baraka* people are incited by some people in the village.
2. These inciters (known as *pairavikars*) thrive in such conflicts among *baraka* people.

Table 4.20 presents the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the first item. It is obvious from this table that conflict among *baraka* people is frequently manipulated by some in both Bhojpur and Mithila. In the latter, this trend appears to be very pronounced. In Mithila, as mentioned before, the conflicting parties generally insulate themselves (Table 4.18). It seems that this gives enough opportunity to the manipulators to play the one against the other. Unlike Mithila, in Bhojpur, *baraka* people, even though in conflict, do not severe their links. Therefore, possibly, they are not so vulnerable to manipulation as the *baraka* men of Mithila are.

Table 4.21 contains the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the second item. It is clear from this table that the inciters (known as *pairavikars*) of conflicts frequently thrive in both Bhojpur and Mithila. *Pairavikars* seem to have a vested

Table 4.20 ***Responses to the Item: Conflicting Parties among the* Baraka *People are Incited by Some People in the Village***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	148 (50.2)	95 (32.2)	52 (17.6)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	36 (63.2)	12 (21.1)	9 (15.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	83 (100.0)	—	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	120 (99.2)	—	—	—	1 (0.8)	121

Table 4.21 ***Responses to the Item:* Pairavikars *Thrive in Conflicts Among* Baraka *People***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	125 (42.4)	93 (31.5)	77 (26.1)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	35 (61.4)	10 (17.5)	12 (21.1)	—	—	57
	Parsa	76 (91.6)	7 (8.4)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	119 (98.3)	—	1 (0.8)	—	1 (0.8)	121

interest in the conflicts of *baraka* people. Their conflidts are generally resolved by the law courts (Table 4.12). *Pairavikar*s have knowledge about cases in the law courts and for this they are paid by the conflicting parties. So, instigating *baraka* people is in their own interest. In Mithila, where the manipulation of conflict has been reported in overwhelming numbers (Table 4.20), *pairavikari* seems to flourish to a greater degree than in Bhojpur.

Coercion

The items included in the schedule in the context of coercion were:

1. A *baraka* man compels a *chhotaka/nanh* to carry his luggage free of cost.
2. *Baraka* men try to encroach upon the land of *chhotaka/nanh*.
3. *Baraka* men pick up any commodity they like from the shops of *chhotaka/nanh* without paying for it.

Table 4.22 illustrates the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the first item. It is obvious from this table that in Bhojpur, *chhotaka/nanh* people are seldom forced to do *begari*. In Mithila, it seems to be the typical style of exploitation by *baraka* men.

Table 4.22 ***Responses to the Item: A* Baraka *Man Compels a* Chhotaka/Nanh *to Carry his Luggage Free of Cost***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	69 (23.4)	162 (54.9)	64 (21.7)	—	—	295
	Khewali	10 (17.5)	24 (42.1)	23 (40.4)	—	—	57
	Parsa	73 (88.0)	10 (12.0)	—	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	115 (95.0)	1 (0.8)	2 (1.7)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 4.23 contains the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the second item. It is clear from this table that encroaching upon the lands of *chhotaka/nanh* is not the typical behaviour of *baraka* people at any village. They *seldom* do so. This indicates that this mode of exploitation, though prevalent to some extent in the villages, is not typical of *baraka* men.

Table 4.24 presents the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the third item. It is obvious from this table that the modal response in this context at Khewali, a satellite village representing the most numerous category of villages, is that the *baraka* men *never* pick up any commodity from the shops of *chhotaka/nanh* without paying the price. In Chougain, they *seldom* do it. In the villages of Mithila also, they *seldom* do so. In Bhojpur, this kind of exploitation seems to be limited to villages like Chougain. In a

Table 4.23 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Baraka** ***Men Try to Encroach upon the Land of*** **Chhotaka/Nanh**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	108 (36.6)	154 (52.2)	33 (11.2)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	10 (17.5)	33 (57.9)	14 (24.6)	—	—	57
	Parsa	26 (31.3)	50 (60.2)	7 (8.4)	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	29 (24.0)	85 (70.2)	5 (4.1)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 4.24 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Baraka** ***Men Take Any Commodity they like from the Shops of*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***without Paying the Price***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	57 (19.3)	197 (66.8)	41 (13.9)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	5 (8.8)	5 (8.8)	47 (82.5)	—	—	57
	Parsa	35 (42.2)	43 (51.8)	5 (6.0)	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	29 (24.0)	80 (66.1)	9 (7.4)	1 (0.8)	2 (1.7)	121

large number of villages which are of the satellite category, this type of exploitation does not prevail. It seems that the situation in Bhojpur is different from that of Mithila in this context, where *baraka* men do pick up commodities, though not frequently, from the shops of *chhotaka/nanh* without paying.

Tables 4.22, 4.23 and 4.24 indicate that the tendency of coercing *chhotaka/nanh* by *baraka* people is greater in Mithila than in Bhojpur.

Patronage

The items included in the schedule regarding patronage were:

1. *Baraka* men offer seasonal fruits free to *chhotaka/nanh*.
2. *Baraka* men help *chhotaka/nanh* in crisis situations with money/grains.

These two items relate to the kind of patronage extended to *chhotaka/nanh* by the *baraka* people in the village.

Table 4.25 has the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the first item. It is obvious from this table that the modal response in each village in this context is that *seldom* do the *baraka* people offer mangoes and other seasonal fruits to *chhotaka/nanh* free. It seems that extending patronage of this kind is not typical of *baraka* people either in Bhojpur or Mithila.

Table 4.25 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Baraka** ***Men Offer Seasonal Fruits Free to*** **Chhotaka/Nanh**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	75 (25.4)	126 (42.7)	93 (31.5)	1 (0.3)	—	295
	Khewali	11 (19.3)	27 (47.4)	19 (33.3)	—	—	57
	Parsa	12 (14.4)	61 (73.5)	10 (12.04)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	4 (3.3)	110 (90.9)	5 (4.1)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 4.26 illustrates the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the second item. This table indicates, in clear terms, that in times of crisis *chhotaka/nanh* receive help from the *baraka* people *frequently* in both Bhojpur and Mithila.

At Khewali, the modal response (42.1 per cent) in this context is not significantly different from the response saying that *baraka* men seldom help the *chhotaka/nanh* in their crisis situations ($X^2 = 3.25$).

At Chougain, however, the modal response is quite significant in this context. Thus, in Bhojpur, it is difficult to infer that it is typical of *baraka* people to help *chhotaka/nanh* in their crisis situations. In Mithila, this tendency appears to be typical of *baraka*

Table 4.26 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Baraka** ***Men Help*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***in Crisis Situations with Money or Grain***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	150 (50.8)	94 (31.9)	49 (16.6)	2 (0.7)	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	24 (42.1)	20 (35.1)	13 (22.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	50 (60.2)	12 (14.3)	21 (25.3)	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	86 (71.1)	4 (3.3)	28 (23.1)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	121

people. It seems that extending patronage to *chhotaka/nanh* is practised more by the *baraka* men of Mithila than those of Bhojpur.

Summary and Discussion

The table-wise discussions just covered suggest some typical patterns of behaviour among the *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* people in the context of various issues under investigation. A summary of the findings, issue-wise, follows.

Norms of Etiquette

Baraka people are generally accorded *darbar*-like treatment by others. They are addressed as *sarkar/huzoor*. *Chhotaka/nanh* people sit on the ground before them. *Baraka* people are generally flattered by all those who visit them. A *darbari* relationship involves *darbaris* and those (in this case, *baraka* people) who are accorded *darbari* behaviour. In the transaction of this relationship, the former display their submission by addressing the *baraka* people as *sarkar/huzoor*, sitting before them on the ground and expressing unquestionable loyalty. The *baraka* people, in response to their *darbari* behaviour, address them non-honorifically, perhaps in order to reinforce the idea that they have control over them.

The *darbari* pattern has been observed to be typical in Mithila.

In Bhojpur, this pattern, though prevalent, may not be considered to be typical. However, *darbar* is done frequently to please the *baraka* men to get some favour of even a petty nature. It is the short-term self-interest that induces one to behave as a *darbari* of a *baraka* man. *Baraka* men use non-honorific addresses for the *chhotaka/nanh*. Even their names are vulgarised. This, again, has been found to be typical of the *baraka* people of Mithila. In Bhojpur, this tendency of the *baraka* people is limited again to the feeder villages which are dominated by old *zamindar* households belonging to the upper caste cluster.

Conflict, its modal pattern, cause, resolution, consequence and manipulation

Styles of conflict behaviour among the *baraka* people vary a great deal from those of the *chhotaka/nanh*. Conflict among the former is generally not visible on the surface, in the sense that it is carried on constantly in the form of intrigue. *Baraka* people appear to be jockeying with each other to assert personal supremacy. In Mithila, this trend seems to be more deep-rooted than in Bhojpur.[1] As their conflict becomes sharper and more manifest, it is generally resolved in the law courts.

However, this is more typical of the feeder villages than of the satellite ones. A feeder village is more complex than a satellite one. Therefore, the number of issues generating conflict might possibly be greater in the former than in the latter. Resorting to *kachehris* seems to be typical of the *baraka* people of both Bhojpur and Mithila for conflict resolution. In this mode of conflict resolution, much expenditure of time and money is involved. Besides, the *kachehri* does not effect a compromise between the parties at the social and personal level. It takes a decision which is in favour

[1] It has been observed that in Bhojpur, there is a sharp polarisation between the upper caste groups, on the one side, and the rest on the other due to socio-historical factors. This horizontal division in a social environment, marked by violence, might promote a cohesive tendency among the *baraka* people who generally belong to the upper caste groups. Possibly this is why the tendency of intriguing against each other has been observed to be weak among them in the villages of Bhojpur covered here. In Mithila, however, a vertical division has been found to characterise the village and, therefore, conflict dominates the inter-relationships at the *baraka* level (see Hetukar Jha, *et al.*, 1985, pp. 17–40).

of one and against the other. So the conflict continues, at least at the latent level, and this seems to promote the tendency of intriguing against each other among the *baraka* people.[2] However, as the data suggest, this kind of conflict, though typical of *baraka* people, is only *seldom* considered desirable (Table 4.16).

One of the typical consequences of conflict among *baraka* people in Mithila is that they insulate themselves from each other. Interaction virtually ceases between the conflicting parties. This is not so in Bhojpur, where it seldom happens. Besides, conflict among *baraka* men tends to have a spread-effect. Again, this trend seems to be stronger in Mithila than in Bhojpur. When conflict appears, there is one role which has been observed to be quite significant. This is the role of the conflict manipulator—who is known in the village by the term *pairavikar*. The typical behaviour of the *pairavikar* is to instigate *baraka* men against each other. In Mithila, as the conflicting parties severe all their connections and do not generally sit together to remove misunderstanding, *pairavikars* have ample opportunity to play one against the other. In the process, they seem to exploit the parties to conflict a great deal. The *pairavikars* have some expertise in dealing with court cases. Since law courts generally take a long time to decide a case, *pairavikars* get engaged on a long term basis for which they charge handsome allowances from the parties. In Mithila, again, this trend appears to be stronger than in Bhojpur. Perhaps, due to this, the practice of *pairavikari* in Mithila seems to be more institutionalized than in Bhojpur.

Among the *chhotaka/nanh* people, the typical pattern of conflict behaviour is the overt manifestation of their anger against each other. Conflict at this level becomes quite visible as they abuse or even assault each other when they have acute dissension among themselves. However, they themselves frequently resolve their difference soon. This has been found to be their typical way of conflict resolution. They do not go to a court of law. Instead, they depend upon their *panchayat*. In the *pahchayati* way of conflict resolution, neither much time nor any substantial amount of money is involved. Besides, the *panchayat* not only decides the issue of conflict but tries to effect a compromise between the

[2] The term 'latent conflict' may be used to describe this situation (see Ralf Dahrendorf, 1972, pp. 134–35).

parties that could be acceptable to them and also the public at large. The *panchayat* takes the public opinion with it and this seems to have a tremendous amount of moral pressure on the parties in conflict to accept its verdict. With the compromise thus effected, the scope of prolonging conflict is substantially reduced among them. Thus, *chhotaka/nanh* people seem to have a strong we-feeling among them. The *baraka* layer, on the contrary, appears to be beset with highly divisive trends.

Coercion and Patronage

In the context of coercion among the *chhotaka/nanh*, the behaviour of the *baraka* people of Bhojpur seems to be quite different from that of Mithila. In *Bhojpur, begari* is seldom forced. In Mithila, it is typical of *baraka* people to ask any available *chhotaka/nanh* to do *begari* for them. Encroaching upon the lands of the *chhotaka/nanh* is seldom practised by the *baraka* people both in Bhojpur and Mithila. Though it is not reported to be *baraka* men's typical behaviour, one may suppose that they have this tendency and do so when they get the opportunity. Further, at Khewali (in Bhojpur), the modal response is that *baraka* people never pick up any commodity from the shops of *chhotaka/nanh* without paying for it. At Chougain, they do so *seldom*. As mentioned before, Chougain is a feeder village dominated by old *zamindar* households belonging to the upper caste cluster. It seems that *baraka* people of villages like Chougain, which are few in number, might have the tendency of picking up commodities from the shops of *chhotaka/nanh*. But, in Bhojpur, in general, considering the modal response at Khewali (which is the satellite kind, the most numerous category), one may suppose that *baraka* people never coerce the *chhotaka/nanh* shopkeepers. However, in Mithila, they seem to have this tendency and seldom coerce the *chhotaka/nanh* shopkeepers by picking up commodities from their shops without paying the price.

Thus, it seems that *chhotaka/nanh* people are much more exploited in Mithila than in Bhojpur. In Bhojpur, they, perhaps, resist the *baraka* people successfully from coercing them. In Mithila, they fail to do so. In this region,

> The ruling class maintained its hegemony over the masses by virtue of having at their disposal the unqualified support of

brahmanic ideology, the upholders of which commanded respect because of their devotion to intellectual pursuits. As a consequence, the masses in spite of being in depressed and wretched conditions, could not ever advance an effective challenge to the system that was in force. The historical conditions in Mithila have thus reduced the status of *chhotaka/nanh* to such an extent that they are more vulnerable to the exploitation by the *baraka* men (Hetukar Jha *et al.*, 1985, p. 42).

In Bhojpur, the historical situation has been different. Here, 'the cluster below the one of upper castes did not submit to the world-views of the latter and its members were conscious enough to assert their own dignity' (Hetukar Jha *et al.*, 1985, p. 20). *Chhotaka/nanh* people belong to the cluster below that of the upper castes. They could not exercise ideological dominance over the former as they did in Mithila (*ibid.*, pp. 17–26). The situation in Bhojpur, thus, has not been favourable to subjecting the *chhotaka/nanh* to exploitation and coercion to the same extent as has been observed in Mithila.

However, the tendency of extending patronage to *chhotaka/nanh* is also higher among the *baraka* men of Mithila than those of Bhojpur. In Mithila, it appears to be their typical behaviour to help *chhotaka/nanh* when they face some crisis by money or grains. In Bhojpur also, they do help *chhotaka/nanh*, but this tendency is not so marked there as in Mithila. Thus, in the region where coercion and exploitation are severe, patronage is also pronounced.

FIVE

Mahajani *Relationships*

The practice of *mahajani* (money and grain-lending) has a long tradition in India. It has been discussed in the *Dharmasutras* of Gautam, Vasistha and Baudhayana (Kane, 1968, p. 73). The *smritis* of Manu and Yajnyavalkya also contain specific regulations about it (*ibid.*, pp. 313, 432). The Hindu law digests include specific directions for the practice of usury (Ramkrishna Jha, 1931, pp. 2–3). The letters of Vidyapati, the famous fifteenth century poet of Mithila, indicate in clear terms the existence of this practice (Indra Kant Jha, 1969, pp. 93–97). However, as described by Ramkrishna Mukherjee (1957a, pp. 38–39), *mahajani* began to dominate rural life increasingly after the Permanent Settlement in Bengal during colonial rule.

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, *mahajani* was noted as a fairly widely institutionalised practice in different parts of Bihar by Grierson (1885, pp. 419–21). Consequently, the condition of the cultivators became precarious. They gradually fell into the clutches of the *mahajans*. This has been described in the 1888 report on the material condition of the lower classes in Bihar.[1] In the regions selected for this study, *mahajani* was observed to be quite deeply entrenched in the agrarian sector in the beginning of this century (Hubback, 1928, pp. 115–17; Kerr, 1926, p. 126). The 'village notes' of Shahabad and Darbhanga also throw much light on the practice of usury in the villages of these districts. In 103

[1] *No. 867 Agri, dated Calcutta, the 5th May, 1888 (confidential).*

'village notes' (about 15 per cent of the total 'village notes' collected) of Shahabad, *mahajani* has been mentioned in the context of the transfer of occupancy rights either by sale or by mortgage.[2] Similarly it has been recorded in the 204 'village notes' (about 21 per cent of the total 'village notes' collected) of Darbhanga.[3] Even after independence, this practice has retained its hold over the agrarian domain quite firmly (Prasad, 1979, pp. 481–84). *Mahajani*, thus, forms an important constituent of the primary level structure of a village. The patterns of relationship among the roles involved in this institutionalised practice have not received much attention so far. This work aims at exploring them.

In this context, the modal relationships have been examined between the *mahajan* (creditor) and the *khaduka* (debtor) on various issues. These include: field of operation of *mahajani*; norms of etiquette; modes of lending money/grains; modes of recovery of loan; coercion and exploitation; patronage; and relationship among the *mahajans*.

Field of Operation of Mahajani

The items included in the schedule regarding the field of operation of *mahajani* were:

1. *Mahajans* deal even with *baraka* people.
2. Recovery of loans from *baraka* people remains uncertain.
3. *Mahajans* generally conduct *mahajani* with *chhotaka/nanh*.

Table 5.1 presents the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the first item. It is obvious from this table that *mahajans seldom* conduct *mahajani* among *baraka* people. This has been observed to be typical of all the four villages of Bhojpur and Mithila.

[2] See, for example, the 'village notes' of Anantpur, No. 60, Pargana-Sasaram, Thana-Sasaram, District-Shahabad; Pipra, No. 7, Pargana-Arrah, Thana-Arrah, District-Shahabad; and of Purkhottampur, No. 15, Pargana-Arrah, Thana-Arrah, Distt Shahabad.

[3] See, for example, the 'village notes' of Koilakh, No. 182, Pargana-Bhour, Thana-Madhubani, Distt-Darbhanga and Siwa, No. 249, Pargana-Gaur, Thana-Madhubani, Distt-Darbhanga.

Table 5.1 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Mahajans** ***Deal Even with*** **Baraka** ***People***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	61 (20.7)	195 (66.1)	37 (12.5)	2 (0.7)	—	295
	Khewali	9 (15.8)	41 (71.9)	7 (12.3)	—	—	57
	Parsa	11 (13.3)	70 (84.3)	2 (2.4)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	19 (15.7)	95 (78.5)	6 (4.9)	1 (0.8)	—	121

Table 5.2 contains the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the second item. The table indicates in clear terms that in each village under study, the recovery of loans from *baraka* people is *frequently* considered to be risky. This has been observed to be the modal response both in Bhojpur and Mithila. It is probably due to this risk that *mahajans* seldom conduct *mahajani* with *baraka* people, as indicated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.2 ***Responses to the Item: Recovery of Loans from*** **Baraka** ***People Remains Uncertain***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	157 (53.2)	120 (40.7)	17 (5.8)	1 (0.3)	—	295
	Khewali	37 (64.9)	12 (21.1)	8 (14.0)	—	—	57
	Parsa	77 (92.8)	5 (6.0)	1 (1.2)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	85 (70.2)	23 (19.0)	4 (3.3)	8 (6.6)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 5.3 illustrates the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the third item. It is clear from this table that *mahajani* is conducted *frequently* with the *chhotaka/nanh* in both Bhojpur and Mithila. The lower section of rural society, thus, constitutes the typical field where *mahajani* flourishes.

Table 5.3 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Mahajans** ***Generally Conduct*** **Mahajani** ***with*** **Chhotaka/Nanh**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	223 (75.3)	68 (23.4)	3 (1.0)	1 (0.3)	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	55 (96.5)	—	2 (3.7)	—	—	57
	Parsa	83 (100.0)	—	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	114 (94.2)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	3 (2.5)	1 (0.8)	121

This seems to be a fairly old practice. Even at the beginning of this century, *mahajans* were observed to have a wide following among the *chhotaka/nanh*.[4] The upper or *baraka* people were generally avoided by them as they were considered troublesome.[5] In this study too, it has been observed that there is generally a risk in the recovery of loans from them (Table 5.2). *Baraka* people have been found to generally jockey with each other (Table 4.15). Besides, they also indulge in litigation (Table 4.12). These tendencies of *baraka* people might prove to be a risk in the recovery of loans from them. And, therefore, *mahajans* avoid the upper sector of rural society for conducting *mahajani*. *Chhotaka/nanh* people, on the contrary, have not been observed to indulge in litigation (Table 4.14). They depend upon the local *panchayat* for resolving their differences (Table 4.13). The *mahajans*, therefore, find this group more convenient to deal with.

Norms of Etiquette

The items included in the schedule regarding norms of etiquette were:

1. *Baraka* debtors sit before *mahajans* in accordance with their dignity.

[4] For example, see 'village note' of Soniawan, No. 24, Pargana-Maner, Thana-Islampur, Distt-Patna.

[5] *Ibid*.

2. *Mahajans* address *chhotaka/nanh* debtors as *re/be*.
3. *Chhotaka/nanh* debtors also sit on chairs/stools before *mahajans*.
4. *Chhotaka/nanh* debtors address *mahajans* as *malik/sarkar/babu*, etc.

Table 5.4 presents the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the first item. It is obvious from this table that the debtors belonging to the *baraka* group in the village are treated honorifically by the *mahajans*. In all the villages under study in both Bhojpur and Mithila, this has been observed to be the typical behaviour of *mahajans* towards *baraka* debtors.

Table 5.4 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Baraka** ***Debtors Sit before*** **Mahajans** ***in Accordance with their Dignity***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	210 (71.2)	63 (21.4)	21 (7.1)	—	1 (0.3)	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	55 (96.5)	2 (3.5)	—	—	—	57
	Parsa	83 (100.0)	—	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	116 (95.9)	1 (0.8)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 5.5 contains the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the second item. It is obvious from this table that the modal response in each village is that the *mahajans* address the *chhotaka/nanh* debtors as *re/be* frequently. The latter are addressed non-honorifically in day-to-day interaction by their *mahajans* in the villages. The trend seems to be more pronounced in Mithila than in Bhojpur.

Table 5.6 has the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the third item. It is obvious from this table that the *chhotaka/nanh* debtors do not sit on chairs or stools before the *mahajans*. In both Bhojpur and Mithila, this appears to be the typical behaviour of the *chhotaka/nanh* when they approach the *mahajans*. They sit on the ground before the *mahajans*. Thus, the

Table 5.5 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Mahajans** ***Address*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***Debtors as Re/Be***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	160 (54.2)	58 (19.7)	76 (25.8)	1 (0.3)	—	295
	Khewali	37 (64.9)	9 (15.7)	11 (19.3)	—	—	57
	Parsa	71 (85.5)	12 (14.5)	—	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	102 (84.3)	14 (11.6)	3 (2.5)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 5.6 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***Debtors also Sit on Chairs/ Stools Before*** **Mahajans**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	34 (11.5)	60 (20.3)	200 (67.8)	—	1 (0.3)	295
	Khewali	7 (12.3)	14 (24.6)	36 (63.2)	—	—	57
	Parsa	—	1 (1.2)	82 (98.8)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	8 (6.6)	1 (0.8)	111 (91.7)	—	1 (0.8)	121

mahajans (who generally belong to the *baraka* group in the village) are accorded the *darbari* style of behaviour by the *chhotaka/nanh khadukas*.

Table 5.7 presents the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the fourth item. This table indicates, in clear terms, that the *chhotaka/nanh* debtors address the *mahajans* as *sarkar/ malik/babu* frequently in each of the villages under study. This appears to be their typical behaviour in relation to the *mahajans*.

The four tables (Tables 5.4–5.7), thus, point out that while *baraka* debtors are received honorifically, the *chhotaka/nanh* people (who constitute the clientele of the *mahajans*) are given

Table 5.7 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***Debtors Address*** **Mahajans** ***as*** **Malik/Sarkar/Babu**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	232 (78.6)	51 (17.3)	11 (3.7)	—	1 (0.3)	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	56 (98.2)	1 (1.8)	—	—	—	57
	Parsa	82 (98.8)	1 (1.2)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	117 (96.7)	—	1 (0.8)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	121

non-honorific (or even abusive) treatment by the *mahajans*. The latter, however, are accorded *darbari* style of behaviour by the *chhotaka/nanh* debtors.

Modes of Lending Money/Grains

The items included in the schedule regarding modes of lending money/grains were:

1. *Mahajans* readily give loans to those who mortgage good lands/costly ornaments.
2. Everyone seeking a loan from a *mahajan* has to do *darbar* before him.

Table 5.8 illustrates the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the first item. It is obvious from this table that a loan is readily advanced when good lands/costly ornaments are mortgaged. This appears to be typical of every village under study. Since the field of operation of *mahajani* is generally limited to the lower sections of society, it seems that even the little bit of land possessed by the *chhotaka/nanh* might ultimately pass into the hands of *mahajans*. This aspect of *mahajani* was also observed during the colonial days.[6] So far as the mortgaging of costly

[6] See the 'village notes' of Pipra, No. 7, Pargana-Arrah, Thana-Arrah, Distt-Shahabad; Purkhottampur, No. 15, Pargana-Arrah, Thana-Arrah, Distt-Shahabad. Ramkrishna Mukherjee (1957a, p. 38) has also taken note of this trend in the rural society of Bengal (which also included Bihar) during the colonial regime.

Table 5.8 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Mahajans** ***Readily Give Loans to those who Mortgage Good Land/Costly Ornaments***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	260 (88.1)	23 (7.8)	11 (3.7)	—	1 (0.3)	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	49 (86.0)	5 (8.8)	3 (5.3)	—	—	57
	Parsa	79 (95.2)	4 (4.8)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	117 (96.7)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

ornaments is concerned, this may possibly have been done by *baraka* debtors.

Table 5.9 contains the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the second item. This table clearly shows that every debtor, irrespective of whether he is a *baraka* man or a *chhotaka/nanh*, behaves as a *darbari* with the *mahajan* in order to get a loan from him. This appears to be the typical behaviour of debtors in relation to the *mahajans* in every village under study. Tables 5.6 and 5.7 throw light on the *darbari* behaviour of *chhotaka/nanh* people in relation to the *mahajans*. However, much more revealing is Table 5.9 in this context. This table indicates that every

Table 5.9 ***Responses to the Item: Those who Seek Loans from a*** **Mahajan** ***Have to do*** **Darbar** ***Before Him***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	231 (78.3)	49 (16.6)	14 (4.7)	—	1 (0.3)	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	52 (91.2)	3 (5.3)	2 (3.5)	—	—	57
	Parsa	72 (86.7)	11 (13.3)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	113 (93.4)	3 (2.5)	3 (2.5)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

person, *baraka* or *chhotaka/nanh*, seeking a loan from a *mahajan* becomes his *darbari*. This suggests that even a *baraka* man assumes the gestures of a *darbari* before a *mahajan* for his self-interest. Of course, the form of *darbari* behaviour of a *baraka* man might not be the same as that of a *chhotaka/nanh*. Table 5.4 makes it clear that *baraka* debtors are allowed to sit before *mahajans* in accordance with their dignity. However, it seems that the *darbari* style of behaviour is resorted to by anyone as a means for achieving his self-interest. Tables 4.5 and 4.6 (discussed before in the context of norms of etiquette between *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh*) also indicate the same tendency.

Modes of Recovery of Loans

The items included in the schedule regarding the modes of recovery of loans were:

1. *Mahajans* take recourse to embarrassing *baraka* debtors in case of delay in the recovery of loan from them.
2. *Mahajans* force *chhotaka/nanh* debtors to pay back their loan by working as labourers for them.
3. *Mahajans* abuse *chhotaka/nanh* debtors in case of delay in the recovery of their loan.
4. *Mahajans* approach the law courts for the recovery of loans.

Table 5.10 presents the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the first item. It is obvious from this table that seldom do the *mahajans* embarrass the *baraka* debtors, even if there is a delay in the recovery of loans from them. This appears to be the typical behaviour of *mahajans* towards *baraka* debtors both in Bhojpur and Mithila. *Mahajans*, it seems, do not like to offend *baraka* debtors in the village, even if they do not pay back loans in time.

Baraka people command much influence in the village. They also have a high orientation towards conflict and litigation (Tables 4.12 and 4.15). Under the circumstances, the *mahajans* might consider it quite risky for the future of their business to embarrass their *baraka* debtors by sending frequent reminders to them for paying back loans. Generally, they also belong to the group of

Table 5.10 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Mahajans** ***Take Recourse to Embarrassing*** **Baraka** ***Debtors in case of Delay in the Recovery of Loans from Them***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	55 (18.6)	178 (60.3)	59 (20.0)	2 (0.7)	1 (0.3)	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	10 (17.5)	30 (52.6)	17 (29.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	29 (34.9)	54 (65.1)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	10 (8.3)	78 (64.5)	15 (12.4)	17 (14.0)	1 (0.8)	121

baraka people in the village and, in order to flourish as *mahajans*, they might like to have a smooth relationship with other *baraka* people who are not money-lenders. This also might be the reason for their practice of conducting *mahajani* with *baraka* people *seldom* (as indicated in Table 5.1).

Table 5.11 details the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the second item. It is clear from this table that the *mahajans* frequently force their *chhotaka/nanh* debtors to pay back their loan by working as labourers for them. This appears to be the typical behaviour of the *mahajans* in relation to their *chhotaka/nanh* debtors in the villages under study in both Bhojpur and Mithila. The data further suggest that this trend is quite strong in the satellite villages. At both Khewali and Parsa, 96.5 per cent and 100 per cent of the respondents respectively were of the view that the *mahajans frequently* force their *chhotaka/nanh* debtors to pay back their loan by working as their labourers. This behaviour has not been considered to be typical of the *mahajans* in the feeder villages to the same extent as in the satellite ones. The satellite villages are less complex than the feeder ones both in the context of caste and occupational composition. The former do not have as much occupational diversity as the latter. It seems, therefore, that in the satellite villages, the *chhotaka/nanh* people do not have much scope to take up different occupations to earn their livelihood. In the feeder villages, the situation is not so helpless. In order to pay back their loans they are, perhaps, left with no other alternative than to work as *mahajans*' labourers in satellite villages.

Table 5.11 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Mahajans** ***Force*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***Debtors to Pay Back their Loans by Working as their Labourers***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	165 (55.9)	94 (31.9)	35 (11.9)	1 (0.3)	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	55 (96.5)	1 (1.8)	1 (1.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	83 (100.0)	—	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	79 (65.3)	36 (29.8)	4 (3.3)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

In the feeder villages, some of them might be able to find better occupations to earn enough to pay back their debts.

Table 5.12 presents the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the third item. It is obvious from this table that the *mahajans* frequently abuse their *chhotaka/nanh* debtors when they fail to pay back their loans in time. This appears to be the typical behaviour of *mahajans* towards their *chhotaka/nanh khadukas* when the recovery of loans is delayed. It seems that the *mahajans* easily resort to violence to recover their loans from *chhotaka/nanh* debtors both in Bhojpur and Mithila. Since *chhotaka/nanh* people do not generally approach the law courts (see Table 4.14), violence against them by the *mahajans* (who belong to the *baraka* group) might, at best, be challenged in the local informal *panchayats*. The effectiveness of these in entertaining the grievances of a defaulting *chhotaka/nanh* debtor against his *mahajan* (who is a *baraka* man) is always doubtful. The social gap between the two parties, in this case, is enormous. Moreover, the debtor is implicated as a defaulter, which apparently legitimises the *mahajan's* claim of charging penalty. Under the circumstances, *chhotaka/nanh* debtors might consider tolerating the abuses of their *mahajans* as more convenient (due to their depressed economic condition) than paying penalty in addition to their debt.

Table 5.13 presents the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the fourth item. It is obvious from this table that the *mahajans* seldom approach the law courts for the recovery of loans from their debtors. This appears to be their typical behaviour

Table 5.12 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Mahajans** ***Abuse*** **Chhotaka/Nanh** ***Debtors in Case of Delay in the Recovery of Loans***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	144 (48.8)	100 (33.9)	49 (16.6)	—	2 (0.7)	295
	Khewali	41 (71.7)	10 (17.5)	6 (10.5)	—	—	57
	Parsa	54 (65.1)	28 (33.7)	1 (1.2)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	112 (92.6)	6 (5.0)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 5.13 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Mahajans** ***Approach the Courts of Law for the Recovery of Loans***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	29 (9.8)	188 (63.7)	77 (26.1)	—	1 (0.3)	295
	Khewali	3 (5.3)	38 (66.7)	16 (28.1)	—	—	57
	Parsa	5 (6.0)	76 (91.6)	2 (2.4)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	6 (5.0)	111 (91.7)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

in the context of loan realisation, both in Bhojpur and Mithila. Since they conduct their business (*mahajani*) mostly among the *chhotaka/nanh*, the need for going to the law courts for the recovery of loans does not arise. As indicated in the Tables 5.11 and 5.12, the *mahajans* manage to recover the principal amount lent and the interest thereof by forcing them to work as labourers for them and also by pressurising them illegally. Loan realisation seems to be associated with the use of force and violence. In the villages, the phrase *lagani-bhirani* is commonly used to denote the practice of usury.[7] *Lagani* means lending money or grain on interest

[7] This was also reported by the investigators in their field-diaries prepared during the phase of qualitative data collection.

while *bhirani* denotes the use of force for the recovery of loans. The association of the two, thus, seems to be so strong and established that the practice of one (*lagani*) cannot generally be believed to be possible without the other (*bhirani*). The belief in this association of the two might possibly lead the debtors of different agencies (other than the local *mahajans*) in the villages to ignore the time-schedule fixed for the recovery of loans and wait until they face at least the threat of the application of force against them.

Exploitation

The item included in the schedule regarding exploitation was: *mahajans* keep some *chhotaka/nanh* people in debt always so that they can force them to work as their labourers.

Table 5.14 presents the region and village-wise distribution of responses to this item. It is obvious from this table that the *mahajans* frequently keep some of the *chhotaka/nanh* people in debt always so that they can force them to work as their labourers. This has been found to be the modal response in every village under study. Table 5.11 also makes it clear that it is the typical behaviour of the *mahajans* to force *chhotaka/nanh* debtors to pay back their loans by working as their labourers.

Table 5.14 *Responses to the Item:* **Mahajans** *Keep some* **Chhotaka/Nanh** *People in Debt Always so that they can Force Them to Work as their Labourers*

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	143 (48.5)	80 (27.1)	71 (24.1)	—	1 (0.3)	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	32 (56.1)	13 (22.8)	12 (21.1)	—	—	57
	Parsa	49 (59.0)	32 (38.6)	2 (2.4)	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	113 (93.4)	5 (4.1)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 5.14 throws further light on this practice of the *mahajans*. It seems that they always retain some people in bondage by keeping them in debt so that they can be forced to work as labourers whenever required. In seasons of intense agricultural activity, labourers are in great demand and they can bargain effectively in their favour. But, being in perpetual debt, they virtually remain captive to their *mahajans*, who exploit their labour in their own interests whenever they like. As Table 5.14 indicates, exploitation seems to be more prominent in Mithila than Bhojpur. The number of respondents considering this behaviour of *mahajans* to be frequent in the villages of Mithila is much more than in the villages of Bhojpur. Tables 4.22, 4.23 and 4.24 also indicate that the exploitation of the *chhotaka/nanh* is higher in scale in Mithila than in Bhojpur.

Patronage

The items included in the schedule regarding patronage were:

1. *Mahajans* condone the interest chargeable from relatives and friends.
2. *Mahajans* condone the interest chargeable from their retained labourers.
3. *Mahajans* support anyone in the village with money/grains when his prestige is at stake.

Table 5.15 contains the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the first item. It is clear from this table that *seldom* do the *mahajans* condone interests chargeable from the debtors who are their friends and relatives. This has been found to be the modal response in the villages of Bhojpur and Mithila. It seems that the *mahajans* generally do not have any consideration for kinship or emotional relationships in their *mahajani* dealing.

Table 5.16 contains the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the second item. This table indicates a similar trend of behaviour among the *mahajans* towards their *jan/banihar* (retained labourers) as has been observed in Table 5.15. They *seldom* condone interests chargeable from their *jan/banihar*. This has been found to be their typical behaviour towards their retained labourers.

Table 5.15 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Mahajans** ***Condone the Interest Chargeable from Relatives and Friends***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	37 (12.5)	214 (72.5)	43 (14.5)	—	1 (0.3)	295
	Khewali	6 (10.5)	31 (54.4)	20 (35.1)	—	—	57
	Parsa	8 (9.6)	74 (89.2)	1 (1.2)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	—	79 (65.3)	22 (18.2)	19 (15.7)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 5.16 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Mahajans** ***Condone the Interest Chargeable from their Retained Labourers***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	21 (7.1)	178 (65.3)	95 (32.2)	—	1 (0.3)	295
	Khewali	10 (17.5)	34 (59.6)	13 (22.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	14 (16.9)	68 (81.9)	1 (1.2)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	4 (3.3)	89 (73.6)	26 (21.5)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

The *jan/banihars* belong to the *chhotaka/nanh* sector of the village. As indicated in Table 5.14, *mahajans frequently* keep some of the *chhotaka/nanh* people in debt always so that they can force them to work as their labourers. Perhaps, the *jan/banihars* are those who are always kept in debt and are, thus, forced to remain retained labourers. Since the motive of the *mahajans* in this context, it seems, is to keep them in debt as long as possible, they seldom condone the interests chargeable from them. This trend appears to be more or less the same in both the regions under study.

Table 5.17 presents the distribution of responses, region and

village-wise, to the third item. It is obvious from this table that in Mithila, the *mahajans* seldom come forward with money or grains in support of those who are in crisis. This appears to be the typical behaviour in both the villages. In Bhojpur, Chougain displays the same style of modal behaviour as has been noted in the villages of Mithila under study. At Khewali, the responses do not appear to be significantly distributed category-wise.[8] Under the circumstances, it is difficult to infer that in this village, too, the typical behaviour of the *mahajans* in this context is the same as that noticed in the other villages. However, considering simply the number of responses in the categories of *F*, *S* and *N*, one may suppose that in this village too, the modal pattern of behaviour of the *mahajans* is to come forward seldom in support of their villagers when their prestige is at stake.

Table 5.17 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Mahajans** ***Support Anyone in the Village with Money or Grains when his Prestige is at Stake***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	57 (19.3)	178 (60.3)	59 (20.0)	—	1 (0.3)	295
	Khewali	15 (26.3)	22 (38.6)	20 (35.1)	—	—	57
	Parsa	9 (10.8)	74 (89.2)	—	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	7 (5.8)	102 (84.3)	10 (8.3)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Tables 5.15, 5.16 and 5.17, thus, indicate that the *mahajans* are *seldom* driven by considerations other than those of their business (i.e., *mahajani*). This has been found to be the typical style of *mahajani* in both Bhojpur and Mithila. Extending patronage even to near and dear ones does not appear to be of any value in the practice of *mahajani*.

[x] X^2 calculated for the distribution of responses in the categories of *F*, *S* and *N* = 1.36 (not significant at the 95 per cent level of significance).

Relationship among the Mahajans

The items included in the schedule regarding relationship among the *mahajans* were:

1. *Mahajans* like each other to flourish in the same locality.
2. *Mahajans* make efforts to involve the capital of each other in the hands of those debtors from whom recovery is difficult.

Table 5.18 details the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the first item. It is clear from this table that the *mahajans* generally do not like each other to flourish in the same locality. This appears to be the typical tendency in both the regions of Bhojpur and Mithila. Perhaps, the trend of monopolising the field of *mahajani* is quite strong among them.

Table 5.18 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Mahajans** ***Like Each Other to Flourish in the Same Locality***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	74 (25.1)	72 (24.4)	148 (50.1)	—	1 (0.3)	295
	Khewali	6 (10.5)	19 (33.3)	32 (56.1)	—	—	57
	Parsa	7 (8.4)	18 (21.7)	58 (69.9)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	6 (5.0)	14 (11.5)	76 (62.8)	24 (19.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 5.19 presents the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the second item. It is obvious from this table that the *mahajans frequently* make efforts to involve the capital of each other in the hands of those debtors from whom recovery is very difficult. This appears to be their typical behaviour towards each other in all the four villages under study.

The data of this table support the findings indicated in Table 5.18 that the *mahajans* do not like each other to flourish in the same locality. *Mahajans* belong to the *baraka* category in the village. As indicated in Table 4.9, *baraka* people generally remain

Table 5.19 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Mahajans** ***try to Involve the Capital of each Other in the Hands of those Debtors from whom Recovery is very Difficult***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	152 (51.4)	80 (27.1)	62 (21.0)	—	1 (0.3)	295
	Khewali	38 (66.6)	6 (10.5)	13 (22.7)	—	—	57
	Parsa	75 (90.4)	7 (8.4)	1 (1.2)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	75 (62.0)	14 (11.6)	1 (0.8)	30 (24.8)	1 (0.8)	121

engaged in jockeying with each other. Conflict (at the latent level) for asserting personal supremacy seems to be the perpetual feature of relationships at this level of society in the villages (Table 4.15). *Baraka* people doing *mahajani* appear to be led by the same trends even in the sphere of their business (*mahajani*). Table 5.19 indicates the tendency of intriguing against each other as typical of the *mahajans*. Table 5.18 suggests the prevalence of monopolistic ambition among them. Concern for asserting and promoting personal supremacy, thus, seems to be typical of the *mahajans* too.

Summary and Discussion

Tables 5.1 to 5.19 and the related discussions suggest some typical behaviour patterns in respect of the different issues under investigation regarding the practice of *mahajani* in the villages of Bhojpur and Mithila. A summary of the findings issue-wise follows.

Field of Operation of Mahajani

The data regarding the field of operation of *mahajani* suggest that the group comprising the *chhotaka/nanh* in the village is frequently exploited by the *mahajans* for their business (see Table 5.3). They seldom deal with the *baraka* people (see Table 5.1). Recovery of loans from them is frequently considered to be risky (see Table 5.2). Since *baraka* people generally remain engaged in intrigues

against each other, the *mahajans*, who also happen to belong to the *baraka* group in the village, might consider it safe for their business to avoid the intriguing group. The chances of having disputes with the intriguing group, particularly in *mahajani* dealings, is always high. And any dispute with them might even go up to the law courts, hampering the practice of *mahajani* in many ways. Perhaps due to this consideration, the *baraka* sector in the village appears to be a risky zone for the practice of *mahajani*. The *chhotaka/nanh* people, on the contrary, do not generally engage in pulling each other's leg; nor do they depend upon the *kachehri* for the resolution of conflict. Further, this sector, being much larger in size than the *baraka* group in the village, provides enough scope for getting clientele. The *mahajans*, therefore, find this zone comparatively easy for the pursuit of their practice. The *baraka–chhotaka/nanh* hierarchy, thus, seems to have been reinforced by this conventional day-to-day practice of *mahajani* by the *baraka* people among the *chhotaka/nanh*.

Norms of Etiquette

Tables 5.4 to 5.7 indicate the prevalence of a *darbari* style of behaviour between the *mahajans* and the *chhotaka/nanh* debtors. Thus, the style of behaviour observed between the *baraka* men and the *chhotaka/nanh* (Tables 4.1 to 4.4) regarding norms of etiquette seems to be extended to the sphere of *mahajani* institution as well. It may be pointed out that at Khewali, the speech behaviour of the *chhotaka/nanh* has not been found to be of the *darbari* style. However, their non-verbal gestures (such as, sitting on the ground before *baraka* men) reflect *darbari* behaviour. Thus, the norms of etiquette prevalent in the sphere of *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* relationships in Bhojpur cannot be held to be typically *darbari*. But, in the case of the *mahajani* institution, even in Bhojpur the norms of etiquette have been found to be typically *darbari*. *Mahajans* were found to be *baraka* men in all the villages under study.[9] *Mahajani* makes a *baraka* man more

[9] In the course of qualitative data collection, it was observed that persons engaged in *mahajani* in the villages under study were identified by the people as *baraka*.

powerful in the village, in the sense that he has direct control over his debtors. This, probably, compels the *chhotaka/nanh* debtors to behave as *darbaris* before their *mahajans*, even at Khewali. In Mithila, the status of *baraka* people is traditionally so high that *chhotaka/nanh* give them *darbari* treatment by virtue of their being *baraka*. And, therefore, *mahajans* (who also happen to be *baraka*) also get the same treatment easily.

Modes of Lending Money or Grain

The data available (Tables 5.8 and 5.9) indicate the prevalence of the age-old tendency of usurers to grab as much land as possible. They readily give loans to those who mortgage good quality land or costly ornaments. Once a piece of land is mortgaged, it is difficult for the mortgager (particularly of the *chhotaka/nanh* group) to get it back.[10] Costly ornaments are generally mortgaged by *baraka* men who can also harass a *mahajan*. It may be for this reason that *baraka* debtors' property might not ultimately be grabbed by them. However, the *mahajans* appear to be interested in enjoying their property, too, as much as possible.

Further, it is also important to note that everybody seeking loans from a *mahajan* has to do *darbar* before him. No doubt, the extent of *darbari* behaviour expected from a *chhotaka/nanh* might be much more than that expected from a *baraka* man seeking loans. However, everybody (irrespective of whether he is a *baraka* or a *chhotaka/nanh*) has to do *darbar* before a *mahajan* in order to get a loan from him. This suggests that even a *baraka* man readily becomes a *darbari* of a *mahajan* whenever he requires a loan from him. In other words, the tendency indicated in Tables 4.5 and 4.6 that *darbari* behaviour is easily adopted in order to promote one's self-interest (even of a petty nature) is frequently displayed in the *mahajani* network too.

Modes of Recovery of Loans; Coercion and Exploitation

The data presented in Tables 5.10, 5.11, 5.12 and 5.13 in the context of the modes of recovery of loans suggest that *mahajani* is

[10] In the course of qualitative data collection, it was reported by many *chhotaka/nanh* people in each village that mortgaged property is seldom regained.

conducted in a manner that could ensure the least possible resistance to it. *Baraka* debtors are seldom reminded to pay back the loan even if they default. Embarrassing them frequently might provoke them to start intriguing against the *mahajan*. This could put both the *mahajan* and *mahajani* in trouble. Due to this, perhaps, the defaulting *baraka* debtors are seldom embarrassed. Similarly, the law courts are also seldom approached for the recovery of loans.

In the law courts, too much time and money is generally involved. The *mahajans* seem to be quite conscious of this and, therefore, consider it more profitable to avoid the law courts as far as possible.

As far as the *chhotaka/nanh* debtors are concerned, they are subjected to ruthless exploitation by the *mahajans*. When they default, they are practically coerced to work as the *mahajans*' labourers. Table 5.14 makes it clear that it is typical of the *mahajans* to keep some of the *chhotaka/nanh* people always in debt so that they can force them to work as their labourers. *Chhotaka/nanh* debtors find themselves helpless before the *mahajans* and surrender to their rule in the village. The might of the *mahajans* is based on their economic strength (or, in other words, the awareness among the *chhotaka/nanh* people that the *mahajans* have the capacity to harass them to any extent) supported by local convention. The occupation of labourer is conventionally associated with the *chhotaka/nanh*. The *baraka* people, in general, have taken advantage of this convention for a long time. Therefore, they would offer the least resistance to the *mahajans*' conduct in this context. Besides, the *mahajans* take care to offend their *baraka* debtors to the minimum possible extent. In the circumstances, they are expected to side with the *mahajans* in their interaction with the *chhotaka/nanh*. Thus, the *mahajans* find it easy to force their *chhotaka/nanh* debtors to work as their labourers whenever they require their services. As already discussed, the use of force also seems to be conventionally associated with the practice of *mahajani*. Perhaps, this makes the *mahajans*' conduct in this context legitimate (at least in their own eyes). Further, it seems that the modes of recovery of loans from the *chhotaka/nanh* debtors reinforce the hierarchy of *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* in the village in subtle ways through day-to-day interactions between the *mahajans* and their *chhotaka/nanh* debtors.

Patronage

Tables 5.15, 5.16 and 5.17 suggest that usurers generally entertain no consideration other than that of profit in their practice. They do not generally spare even their near and dear ones from the debt trap. They seldom come forward in support of someone in the village whose prestige is at stake. It seems that extending patronage to fellow-villagers has not remained typically associated with the practice of *mahajani* in the villages. The role of *mahajans*, thus, appears to be that of an alien for the village. A *mahajan* living in a village derives his social existence from that village. However, he behaves with his villagers in the context of his business (*mahajani*) as if he were an alien. This ambivalent situation of *mahajani* (one of the most widely prevalent practices in the rural sector) reflects the weakness of the village as a social reality.

Relationship Among Mahajans

The data contained in Tables 5.18 and 5.19 make it clear that the *mahajans*' behaviour towards each other is not different from the typical observed behaviour of those belonging to the broader category of *baraka* people. The *mahajans* also belong to this category on the basis of their socio-economic status. The present data, however, seem to confirm their membership of the *baraka* group in terms of their behaviour among themselves as well. Like other *baraka* men in the village, they also seem to be jockeying with each other for promoting and asserting their personal supremacy.

SIX

Bataidari *Relationships*

Bataidari has been associated with the agrarian system of India for a long time. The laws of Manu and Yajnyavalkya refer to *ardhika* and *ardhasiri* as sharecroppers (A.K. Choudhary, 1971, p. 91). The early medieval records also indicate the existence of this category in the agrarian structure (*ibid.*, p. 115). During the Mughal period, according to Saiyid Nurul Hasan (1983, p. 21), *bataidari* was practised by many peasant proprietors. Irfan Habib (1963, pp. 120–21) contends that this practice persisted even after the great Mughals and, in fact, recorded a phenomenal growth during British rule. Ramkrishna Mukherjee (1957a, pp. 26–40) has analysed the relevant records of the colonial period in this context and has shown precisely how the category of sharecroppers gradually increased in size following the Permanent Settlement of 1793.

In Bihar, *bataidari* was observed to be a widely prevalent practice by the last quarter of the nineteenth century (Grierson, 1885, pp. 196–97). In the beginning of this century, *bataidars*—that is, under-*raiyats* (or tenants-at-will) who did not enjoy occupancy rights—held about 1 per cent of the total occupied area in Shahabad, 4.1 per cent of the total occupied area in Muzaffarpur and at least about 2 per cent of the total occupied area in each of the remaining districts (Hubback, 1928, p. 110). The 'village notes' also present significant information in this context. Of the total 950 'village notes' made available so far for Darbhanga, about 75 per cent record the prevalence of under-*raiyati* or *shikmi* tenure. Similarly,

in Shahabad too, *shikmi* tenure has been recorded in about 60 per cent of the total 693 'village notes' made available so far. It seems that under-*raiyati* or *shikmi* tenure, though covering small areas district-wise, prevailed in a fairly large number of villages. Later, this tenure became an important issue for the kisan sabha movement in Bihar during the 1930s (Srivastav, 1980–81, pp. 214–15; Henningham, 1982, pp. 139–69). Even after independence and the abolition of *zamindari* in Bihar, *bataidari* has remained one of the main features of agrarian structure (see *Report of the Flaming Fields of Bihar*, 1986 [hereafter *Report*, 1986], pp. 49–52; Karna, 1981, pp. 184–206; Thakur, 1977). Thus, the practice of *bataidari* has remained associated with day-to-day life in the villages for quite a long time and, therefore, constitutes an important part of the primary level structure of a village which is the focus of this study. Studies and observations made so far on *bataidari* generally do not throw much light on the relationship between *bataidars* and their *maliks*. In this study, an attempt has been made to examine the modal relationship styles between these two partners regarding issues other than those of exploitation. The issues of the study in this context are: operation of *bataidari* as conducted by the *malik*; operation of *bataidari* as conducted by the *bataidars*; exploitation and coercion; and patronage.

Operation of Bataidari as Conducted by the Malik

The items included in the schedule in the context of operation of *bataidari* as conducted by the *malik* were:

1. The *malik* allows his *bataidar* to do *bataidari* on a particular piece of land for not more than two or three years at a stretch.
2. The *malik* gives not more than about an acre of land to one *bataidar* for *bataidari* at a time.

Table 6.1 presents region and village-wise distribution of responses to the first item. It is obvious from this table that a *malik* (land-owner) does not allow any *bataidar* to cultivate a particular piece of land for more than two or three years at a time. This is the

Table 6.1 ***Responses to the Item: A* Malik *Allows his* Bataidar *to do* Bataidari *on a Particular Land for not More than Two or Three Years at a Stretch***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	185 (62.7)	89 (30.2)	20 (6.8)	1 (0.3)	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	44 (77.2)	8 (14.0)	5 (0.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	80 (96.4)	3 (3.6)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	116 (95.9)	3 (2.5)		1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

modal behaviour of the *maliks* in all the four villages under study. *Bataidari* tenure, thus, is a short-term tenure.[1]

Table 6.2 illustrates the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the second item. It is clear from this table that the relatively small pieces of land are given on *bataidari* lease by the *maliks*. This appears to be the modal pattern in both Bhojpur and Mithila. It appears that the *maliks* are more interested in having a number of *bataidars* on their land. A *bataidar* virtually becomes

Table 6.2 ***Responses to the Item: A* Malik *Gives not more than an Acre of Land at a Time to the* Bataidar**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	191 (64.7)	67 (22.7)	37 (12.5)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	31 (54.4)	15 (26.3)	11 (19.3)	—	—	57
	Parsa	78 (94.0)	5 (6.0)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	117 (96.7)	2 (1.7)		1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

[1] B.N. Verma and B.K. Mishra of Rajendra Agricultural University, Pusa, Bihar, also observed the same practice regarding *bataidari* tenure in their study of Musahari block of district Muzaffarpur, Bihar (see *Report*, 1986, p. 51).

dependent upon his *malik* and it serves his interest more if he has a number of dependents under him (*Report*, 1986, p. 51). *Bataidari*, in this context, seems to involve one *malik* and several *bataidars*.

Operation of Bataidari as Conducted by Bataidars

The items included in the schedule in the context of operation of *bataidari* by *bataidars* were:

1. A *bataidar* leases land from as many *maliks* as possible at a time.
2. A *bataidar* has to do *darbar* before *maliks* to get land on *batai*.

Table 6.3 contains the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the first item. It is clear from this table that a *bataidar* leases lands belonging to more than one *malik*. This appears to be the modal pattern of *bataidari* lease in both Bhojpur and Mithila. One *bataidar*, thus, remains involved in a *bataidari* relationship with several *maliks*. Since the amount of land given to him on *bataidari* lease by a single land-owner is too small (see Table 6.1) to meet the requirements of his family, he has to approach many *maliks* to get sufficient land that could at least sustain his family for the whole year. In this process, he tags himself with several *maliks* and this might, possibly, make his situation precarious.

Table 6.3 *Responses to the Item: A* Batidar *Leases the Land of as Many* Maliks *as Possible at a Time*

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	155 (52.5)	144 (38.6)	26 (8.8)	—	—	295
	Khewali	47 (82.5)	8 (14.0)	2 (3.5)	—	—	57
	Parsa	82 (98.8)	1 (1.2)	—	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	103 (85.1)	14 (11.6)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 6.4 illustrates the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the second item. It is obvious from this table that *bataidars* have to do *darbar* before *maliks* to get lands on *batai*. This appears to be the modal pattern of getting a *bataidari* lease in both Bhojpur and Mithila. Since the number of those demanding land for *batai* is far more than the number of *maliks*, the competition among the former virtually compels them to do *darbar*. *Darbari* behaviour seems to be so institutionalised that even the decision regarding the grant of *bataidari* by *maliks* is based on the consideration of *darbar*. Granting *bataidari* appears to be as good as granting favour (i.e., *kripa*); to get *kripa* one has to do *darbar*. *Maliks* expect those demanding their *kripa* to do *darbar, i.e.*, display submission (by addressing the *maliks* as *sarkar/huzoor*, sitting before them on the ground and expressing unquestionable loyalty to them) to the authority of the *maliks*. This probably gives them the satisfaction that they have control not only over their land but also over those who cultivate them. Control over land and people on the land has been observed to be a dominant consideration for the land-owning group in Bihar since the beginning of colonial rule (Hagen, 1981, p. 203; P.H. Prasad, 1974).

Table 6.4 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Bataidars** ***have to do*** **Darbar** ***before*** **Maliks** ***to get Land on*** **Batai**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	226 (76.6)	47 (15.9)	22 (7.5)	—	—	295
	Khewali	51 (89.5)	5 (8.8)	1 (1.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	76 (91.6)	7 (8.4)	—	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	117 (96.7)	2 (1.7)	—	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Exploitation and Coercion

The items included in the schedule regarding exploitation and coercion were:

1. *Bataidars* have to side with their *maliks* whenever the *maliks* require their support to fight cases with others in the law courts.
2. *Bataidars* have to work even as labourers for their *maliks*.

Table 6.5 contains the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the first item. It is obvious from this table that in Mithila, *bataidars* have to side with their *maliks* frequently whenever the *maliks* require their support to fight cases with others in the law courts. They may be produced as witnesses for their *maliks* or they may have to appear as complainants on behalf of their *maliks*. Either way, the *maliks* involve them in their conflicts. In Mithila, this appears to be the typical behaviour of *maliks* in relation to their *bataidars*. However, even within this region, this tendency appears to be more predominant in satellite villages than in the feeder ones. A feeder village, being more complex in terms of diversity of occupations, does not seem to provide as such scope for the exploitation of *bataidars* as a satellite village does.

Bhojpur differs markedly from Mithila in this context. At Chougain, the *bataidars seldom* have to side with their *maliks* in the latter's court cases. At Khewali, the number of respondents saying that the *bataidars* have to side with their *maliks frequently* in the latter's court cases, though the greatest, is not significantly different from that recorded in the following column (X^2 for the above two = 0.02). Under the circumstances, it may be supposed that unlike the *maliks* of Mithila, those of Bhojpur do not generally drag their *bataidars* into their conflicts with others. However, even in this region, the tendency of the *maliks* of satellite villages to coerce their *bataidars* appears to be greater than that of the *maliks* of the feeder villages. The difference between the feeder and satellite villages in this context seems similar to that observed in the case of Mithila.

Table 6.6 illustrates the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the second item. This table indicates a more or less similar pattern of responses as was noted regarding the previous item (see Table 6.5). *Bataidars* have to work even as labourers *frequently* on their *malik's* land in the villages of Mithila. This trend appears to be more pronounced in the satellite village. In Bhojpur, however, this does not appear to be the modal behaviour of *bataidars*. At Chougain, the modal response in this context makes

Table 6.5 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Bataidars** ***have to Side with their*** **Maliks** ***whenever they Require their Support to Fight Cases with Others in Law Courts***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	59 (20.0)	200 (67.8)	36 (12.2)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	28 (49.1)	21 (36.8)	8 (14.0)	—	—	57
	Parsa	82 (98.8)	1 (1.2)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	77 (63.6)	42 (34.7)	—	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 6.6 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Bataidars** ***have to Work even as Labourers of*** **Maliks**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	50 (16.95)	204 (69.15)	41 (13.90)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	25 (43.86)	22 (38.60)	10 (17.54)	—	—	57
	Parsa	80 (96.39)	3 (3.61)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	70 (57.85)	49 (40.50)	—	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

this clear. Further, at Khewali, again, as was observed regarding the previous item (see Table 6.5), the difference between the modal response (25) and the frequency for the following column (22) is not at all significant ($X^2 = 0.08$). Hence, it is difficult to suppose that it is typical of the *bataidars* of the satellite villages of Bhojpur to work as labourers for their *maliks*, though this trend appears to be more pronounced in these villages. In Bhojpur, the exploitation of *bataidars* in this context seems to be on a much smaller scale than in Mithila. In north Bihar (which includes Mithila) this trend has been observed to be fairly strong (*Report*, 1986, p. 51).

Patronage

The item included in the schedule regarding patronage was: *Maliks* come forward in support of their *bataidars* when they are in need.

Table 6.7 presents the region and village-wise distribution of responses to this item. It is obvious from this table that in the villages of Mithila under study, it is typical of *maliks* to help their *bataidars* when they are in need. In Bhojpur, the feeder village under study, also displays the same trend. The *maliks* of Chougain help their *bataidars* frequently when they are in need. This trend, though typical of the *maliks* of Chougain, does not appear to be as strong as at Parsa and Bhagwatipur. Further, at Khewali, the distribution of responses in the categories *F*, *S* and *N* is not significantly different from the null situation ($X^2 = 1.36$, not at all significant at the 95 per cent level of significance). Under the circumstances, it is difficult to assume that the modal response in this case represents the reality. Thus, at Khewali, one cannot be sure of what *maliks* do for their *bataidars* when they are in need. This table, however, makes it clear that the trend of extending patronage to *bataidars* is much stronger among the *maliks* of the villages of Mithila than among those of the villages of Bhojpur.

Table 6.7 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Maliks** ***Support their*** **Bataidars** ***When they are in Need***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	176 (59.7)	87 (29.5)	32 (10.8)	—	—	295
	Khewali	23 (40.4)	18 (31.6)	16 (28.1)	—	—	57
Mithila	Parsa	80 (96.4)	3 (3.6)	—	—	—	83
	Bhagwatipur	105 (86.8)	13 (10.7)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Summary and Discussion

Operation of Bataidari

In this study, the way the *bataidari* system works has been dealt with. The method used was to observe the modes of operation of both the *bataidar* and *malik*. The *bataidari* lease is generally of a short-term nature (see Table 6.1) and the plots of land given on lease are small, generally not exceeding about an acre (see Table 6.2). As far as the duration of the lease is concerned, it seems that the mode of operation of *batai* has undergone some change since the beginning of this century. However, before this issue is taken up for discussion, it is important to analyse the very system of *bataidari*.

In this study, it has been observed that the *bataidar* is an under-*raiyat* having no occupancy right on the land he cultivates. The land belongs to somebody else (known as the *malik*) who holds the tenancy of that land. A *bataidari* lease is given orally on the condition that half the produce would be taken by the *malik* while the rest would go to the *bataidar*. The *bataidar* undertakes the responsibility of cultivating the land. In the beginning of this century, too, this system prevailed. Under-*raiyats* were known as *shikmi-raiyats*. They had no occupancy right on the lands cultivated by them.[2] The system of equal division of crops produced between the occupancy tenant/*malik* and the *shikmidar* was followed by both.[3] This system was known as *batai*, and was one of three systems (*viz.*, *batai, bhoali* and *mankhap*) of realising produce-rents from occupancy tenants (O'Malley, 1908, p. 80). After the abolition of *zamindari* in Bihar, these systems of taking produce-rent from occupancy-tenants were no longer practised. However, *shikmidari* continued to be practised informally between the tenant/*malik* and the *shikmidar* (non-occupancy tenant). Since the *batai* system of taking produce-rent prevailed in the sphere of *shikmi* tenancy before the abolition of *zamindari* and continued even later (when the system of taking produce-rent ceased to

[2] The 'village notes' which I collected, mentioned before, record the following: 'Shikmi raiyats do not acquire occupancy right by custom.' See, for example, the 'village note' of Pandeypur, No. 78, Pargana-Maner, Thana-Maner, Distt Patna.

[3] See, for example, the 'village note' of Sihoria, No. 232, Pargana-Gaur, Thana-Madhubani, Distt Darbhanga.

operate), this tenancy came to be known as *bataidari*. The tenants-at-will (*shikmi* tenants) are known as *bataidars*. Even at this level of tenancy, which is now popularly known as *bataidari*, different types (such as *manibatai, tehai* and *chouthai*) have been observed to be in practice at places (see *Report*, 1986, pp. 49–50). However, division of crops produced equally between the *malik* and *bataidar* seems to be the typical pattern of the *bataidari* system in Bihar.

The duration of the *bataidari* lease was for two or three years, even in the beginning of this century.[4] It seems this practice has not undergone any change over the decades. Possibly, the legal provision (and the emerging consciousness thereof) that a *bataidar* cultivating a land continuously for at least twelve years can claim tenancy on that, poses a threat to the land-controlling tendency of the *maliks*. They deliberately keep the duration of the *bataidari* lease too small to allow the law to threaten their control on the lands leased out. Due to this legal protection for the *bataidars*, the *malik* does not lease out more than about an acre of land to one person. He would consider it quite risky to lease out a large portion of land to one *bataidar* who could become tempted and even make false claim of tenancy over it. A small tract of land, even if it remains disputed for some time, does not really matter too much to the *maliks*. Besides, a number of *bataidars* (holding small pieces of land on lease) remain available to them virtually as their dependents. Since the number of those demanding *bataidari* leases appears to be considerably larger than that of the land-owners (who are in a position to lease out their lands on *batai*), some sort of competition among the former for securing the *maliks'* favour in this context is bound to emerge. This prompts them to even do *darbar* before the *maliks* (Table 6.4). The *maliks*, thus, find themselves in an advantageous situation of exploiting the *bataidars* for the *kripa* (favour) they bestow on them. A *bataidar* has to approach different *maliks* to get a sufficient amount of land on lease (Table 6.3) that could yield at least so much as to allow him and the members of his family to subsist. He has to maintain a *bataidari* relationship with many *maliks*. It seems, thus, that he subjects himself to the exploitation (or the threat of exploitation) of not just one but many *maliks*.

[4] For example, see the 'village note' of Kalapur, No. 133, *Pargana*-Maner, Thana-Bikram, Distt Patna.

Coercion and Patronage

Tables 6.5 and 6.6 make it clear that the *bataidars* are subjected to coercion and exploitation much more in the villages of Mithila than in those of Bhojpur. They generally belong to the cluster of non-upper castes.[5] Regarding Mithila, it has been pointed out elsewhere that

> this zone has remained in relative peace throughout historical periods. The ruling class maintained its hegemony over the masses by virtue of having at their disposal the unqualified support of brahmanic ideology, the upholders of which commanded respect because of their devotion to intellectual pursuits. As a consequence, the masses (in spite of being in depressed and wretched conditions) could not ever advance an effective challenge to the system that was in force . . . . the brahmanic ideology reigned supreme and no force could emerge to counter it from the section of non-upper castes at any period of history (Hetukar Jha *et al.*, 1985, pp. 42–43).

The cluster of upper castes (particularly the *brahmans*), thus, exercised economic, administrative and also ideological dominance over the rest (Hetukar Jha, 1980, pp. 187–205).

As a consequence, the non-upper caste people remained oppressed and subservient (Hetukar Jha, 1980, p. 188; Stevenson-Moore, 1922, pp. 6, 182, 361–65). Perhaps, their long tradition of subjugation to the rule of the *maliks* until the abolition of the *zamindari* system has moulded their behaviour patterns in such a way that those doing *bataidari* do not find themselves in a position to refuse to be exploited.

The case of Bhojpur is entirely different. Here, the non-upper castes have been asserting their dignity for long (Hetukar Jha *et al.*, 1985, p. 24). They never submitted themselves to the world-view of the upper castes (*ibid.*). Besides, this zone has displayed a strong propensity for violence since ancient times (*ibid.*). As a result of all this, the non-upper castes in Bhojpur have stood together from time-to-time in opposition to the dominance of the

[5] Even in the villages studied, the *bataidars* were found to be mainly of the non-upper castes (see also *Report*, 1986, pp. 48–49).

maliks (who have been generally of upper caste groups) (*ibid.*, pp. 17–40). This tradition makes it perhaps difficult for the *maliks* in Bhojpur to exploit their *bataidars* to the extent that it is possible in Mithila.

The data of Tables 6.5 and 6.6 also suggest that the trend of exploitation of the *bataidars* seems to be stronger in the satellite villages than in feeder ones. The latter are more complex than the former. A feeder village generally functions as a centre of communication, educational activity, health-care and trade. It has, therefore, some links with the external social and economic order. It is more open than a satellite village and has more opportunity for job-seekers. A satellite village is relatively more closed and isolated than a feeder one. Those who need to earn a living have hardly any option other than working as *bataidars* or labourers in a satellite village. *Bataidars* of satellite villages are, thus, more dependent upon their *maliks* than those of the feeder villages. Hence, there is much more scope for exploitation of the *bataidars*.

As regards patronage, Table 6.7 makes it clear that the *maliks* in the villages of Mithila under study help their *bataidars* frequently when they are in need. Extending patronage to *bataidars* appears to be their typical behaviour. In Bhojpur, this trend is not so pronounced. In an earlier study, a north Bihar village (with a similar tradition to that of Mithila) was observed to be vertically split into two groups, each led by a *malik* (Hetukar Jha *et al.*, p. 55). Conflict between the two *maliks* leads each to draw support from all categories of people in the village. In this process, the *malik* has to extend patronage to his *bataidars* as well. In Bhojpur, the socio-historical factors have been such as to create a polarisation between the upper caste cluster and the rest of the caste groups (*ibid.*, p. 26). In a village characterised by horizontal split, the *maliks* (generally belonging to the upper caste cluster) as a group have to confront the non-upper caste groups. In such circumstances, the probability of *maliks* extending patronage to their *bataidars* is quite limited. This may be the reason why this trend is not so well pronounced in Bhojpur as compared to Mithila.

SEVEN

Janouri *Relationships*

Janouri implies an institutionalised relationship between a *malik* (landowner) and his *jan* (labourer) and *halwaha* (ploughman). There are two broad categories of *jan*. One consists of those who are free to sell their labour and the other encompasses attached or retained labourers.[1] *Janouri* generally refers to the relationship between the *malik* and his attached or retained *jans* who mainly belong to non-upper caste groups (Bose and Ghosh in *Report*, 1986, p. 54; Jannuzi, 1974, p. 56).

This institution seems to be very old. The 'village notes' prepared during the first cadastral survey of Bihar by the British clearly indicate that it was practised by the non-upper caste groups (as *jan*) in almost every inhabited village.[2] They were known by the terms *kamia* and *bahia*.[3] A late nineteenth century report (No. 286G, dated Bankipore, 2 June 1888) of the commissioner of Patna Division also describes the wide prevalence of this institution in Bihar at the time and, further, makes clear that the attached

[1] See *Report from the Flaming Fields of Bihar*, 1986, p. 54 (hereafter *Report*, 1986); the first category has been subdivided into two—the landowning and the landless.

[2] See, for example, 'village notes' of Bargaon, No. 402, Pargana-Beswak, Thana-Bihar, Distt-Patna; Khairi, No. 112, Pargana-Sasaram, Thana-Sasaram, Distt-Shahabad; Louhar, No. 62, Pargana-Arrah, Thana-Arrah, Distt-Shahabad; Maharail, No. 269, Pargana-Gopalpur, Thana-Madhubani, Distt-Darbhanga.

[3] See the 'village notes' of Bargaon and Maharail, *op. cit.*

jans were mainly from the non-upper castes.[4] This institution, thus, seems to have been in existence since the second half of the last century. It appears to be a remnant of the old system of slavery that was abolished in 1843 (Chanana, 1960, p. 3). According to Dev Raj Chanana,

> slavery was widespread in almost all the regions of the country and . . . it was in accord with Hindu law and has been in existence since ancient times. The existence of this institution among the Brahmins of Mithila, well known in the Middle Ages for their knowledge of sacred texts, is confirmed by the documents registering sales and purchases of slaves (*ibid.*).

Thus, the kind of slavery that was practised in India had the support of Hindu law. It is possibly due to this that slavery (even after it was legally abolished) continued in the form of *janouri*. The tradition of *janouri* appears to be fairly ancient. It is in this sense that this institution forms an important part of the primary level structure of a village, the focus of this endeavour. An attempt has been made to explore the typical styles of relationship between the *malik* and his *jan* regarding the following items: norms of etiquette; mode of operation; exploitation and coercion; conflict; and patronage. The findings regarding each of these five aspects of the *janouri* relationship follow.

Norms of Etiquette

The items included in the schedule regarding norms of etiquette were:

1. *Maliks* address their *jans* as *re/be* and vulgarise their names.
2. *Maliks* abuse their *jans* when addressing them.
3. *Jans* address their *maliks* as *sarkar/huzoor*.
4. *Jans* sit on the ground before their *maliks*.

Table 7.1 presents the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the first item. It is obvious from this table that the

[4] *Report on the Condition of the Lower Classes of Population in Bengal*, 1888 (hereafter *Report*, 1888).

Table 7.1 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Maliks** ***Address their*** **Jans** ***as*** **Re/Be** ***and Vulgarise their Names***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	158 (53.56)	93 (31.53)	43 (14.58)	—	1 (0.3)	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	20 (35.1)	21 (36.8)	16 (28.1)	—	—	57
	Parsa	82 (98.8)	—	—	1 (1.2)	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	116 (95.9)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

jans in the villages of Mithila under study are frequently addressed as *re/be* and their names are also vulgarised while being addressed. In Bhojpur, this trend appears to be modal only in the feeder village. At Khewali, a satellite village, the categories *F*, *S* and *N* do not differ significantly from each other in terms of the distribution of responses ($X^2 = 0.73$). Therefore, it is difficult to specify any particular trend in this village as typical. Under the circumstances, one may suppose that in Bhojpur, addressing *jans* non-honorifically is typical of the *maliks* of only the feeder villages (particularly those where there are predominantly old *zamindar* families belonging to upper caste groups). Even in such villages of Bhojpur, this pattern of behaviour of the *maliks* (though found to be typical) does not seem to be so pronounced as that of the *maliks* of the villages of Mithila.

Table 7.2 contains the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the second item. It is clear from this table that the *maliks seldom* abuse their *jans* while addressing them in the villages studied in both Bhojpur and Mithila. It does not seem to be typical of the *maliks* to abuse their *jans* even though the *maliks* frequently use non-honorific addresses for the latter (particularly in Mithila).

Table 7.3 illustrates the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the third item. It is obvious from this table that the *jans* address their *maliks* frequently as *sarkar/huzoor*. This appears to be their typical behaviour in relation to their *maliks* both in Bhojpur and Mithila. This behaviour is in accordance with the

Table 7.2 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Maliks *Abuse their* Jans *while Addressing Them***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	47 (15.9)	219 (74.2)	28 (9.5)	—	1 (0.3)	295
	Khewali	10 (17.5)	30 (52.6)	17 (29.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	21 (25.30)	61 (73.49)	1 (1.2)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	16 (13.2)	99 (81.8)	3 (2.5)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 7.3 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Jans *Address their* Maliks *as* Sarkar/Huzoor**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	264 (89.5)	22 (7.5)	8 (2.7)	—	1 (0.3)	295
	Khewali	46 (80.7)	6 (10.5)	5 (8.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	83 (100.0)	—	—	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	117 (96.7)	1 (0.8)	—	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	121

darbari style, discussed before. One may, thus, presume the style of speech of *jans* towards their *maliks* in the context of norms of etiquette to be *darbari* in both the regions under study.

Table 7.4 details the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the fourth item. This table clearly indicates that the *jans* in all the villages under study *frequently* sit on the ground before their *maliks*. This appears to be their typical behaviour in relation to their *maliks* both in Bhojpur and in Mithila. Both Tables 7.3 and 7.4 make it clear that the norms of etiquette followed by the *jans* in their relationship with the *maliks* indicate the *darbari* style of behaviour as being typical of the *jans*. However, this trend appears to be stronger among the *jans* in Mithila than among those of Bhojpur.

Table 7.4 ***Responses to the Item:* Jans *Sit on the Ground before* Malik**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	247 (83.7)	32 (10.8)	15 (5.1)	—	1 (0.3)	295
	Khewali	34 (59.6)	11 (19.3)	12 (21.1)	—	—	57
	Parsa	83 (100.0)	—	—	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	119 (98.3)	—	—	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Mode of Operation of Janouri

The items included in the schedule in the context of mode of operation of *janouri* were:

1. A *jan* is identified as being the *jan* of a particular *malik*.
2. *Jans* settle on their *maliks'* land.
3. *Jans* have to work for their *malik* whenever the *malik* likes.
4. *Jans* work for others only when their *maliks* do not require their labour.

The findings regarding each of these items follow.

Table 7.5 illustrates the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the first item. It is obvious from this table that the *jans* in the villages under study are *frequently* identified as being the *jans* of their *maliks*. This appears to be a typical means of identification both in Bhojpur and Mithila. This indicates that the attachment of *jans* with their *maliks* is greatly institutionalised.

Table 7.6 contains the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the second item. It is clear from this table that the *jans* are now *seldom* settled on their *maliks'* lands. In the course of data collection, it was reported by many old men in the villages under study that the *jans* used to be settled by the *maliks* on their own lands during the *zamindari* days. After the abolition of *zamindari*, the lands on which the *jans* were settled began to be claimed by them as their property under law. Their struggle in this

Table 7.5 ***Responses to the Item: A* Jan *is Identified as being the* Jan *of a Particular* Malik**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	182 (61.69)	100 (33.90)	13 (4.4)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	49 (86.0)	7 (12.3)	1 (1.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	81 (97.6)	2 (2.4)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	103 (85.1)	14 (11.6)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 7.6 ***Responses to the Item:* Jans *are Settled on their* Malik's *Land***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	65 (22.0)	166 (56.3)	64 (21.3)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	3 (5.3)	33 (57.9)	21 (36.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	14 (16.9)	69 (83.1)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	12 (9.9)	106 (87.6)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

context is still continuing (*Report*, 1986, p. 55). However, as the data of Table 7.6 suggest, the modal pattern of settlement of *jans* appears to be free from the control of their *maliks* in both the regions of Bhojpur and Mithila.

Table 7.7 presents the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the third item. It is obvious from this table that the *jans* have to work for their *maliks* frequently as and when they require their labour. This appears to be the typical mode of operation of *janouri* in both the regions of Bhojpur and Mithila. The data of the table indicate the control that *maliks* have over their attached *jans*.

Table 7.8 illustrates the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the fourth item. The data in this table clearly

Table 7.7 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Jans** ***have to Work for their*** **Maliks** ***as and when the*** **Maliks** ***Desire***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	272 (92.2)	17 (5.8)	6 (2.0)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	35 (61.4)	12 (21.1)	10 (17.5)	—	—	57
	Parsa	80 (96.4)	3 (3.6)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	113 (93.4)	5 (4.1)	—	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 7.8 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Jans** ***Work for Others only when their*** **Maliks** ***do not Require their Labour***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	195 (66.1)	88 (29.8)	11 (3.7)	1 (0.3)	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	55 (96.5)	1 (1.8)	1 (1.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	83 (100.0)					83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	113 (93.4)	5 (4.1)	—	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	121

indicate that *maliks* exercise their control over the *jans* quite strongly. The *jans* generally work for others only when their *maliks* do not require their labour. This appears to be their typical behaviour under the constraint of control in both Bhojpur and Mithila.

Tables 7.5, 7.6, 7.7 and 7.8 suggest that the *maliks*' control over their *jans* is still quite strong. The *jans*' attachment to their *maliks* is so established that they depend upon their *maliks* even for their identity. This might strengthen their sense of dependence on their *maliks* in day-to-day life. However, they seem to be free from them at least in one respect (that is, legal possession of their

homesteads). This helps them to assert their social existence. They have some freedom to choose their *maliks* as they do not face any threat of eviction from their homesteads. But their attachment to their *maliks* seems to be dependent upon factors which are so important that the control of the *maliks* remains effective. Thus, *janouri* is conducted in such a manner that the relationship between the *maliks* and their *jans* appears to be merely one-way control of the former over the latter.

Exploitation and Coercion

The items included in the schedule regarding exploitation were:

1. *Maliks* try to force their *jans* to vote for their candidates in elections.
2. *Jans* have to side with their *maliks* whenever they require their support to fight cases with others in law courts.
3. *Maliks* try to keep their *jans* always in debt.

An item-wise discussion of the findings is given below.

Table 7.9 contains the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the first item. It is clear from this table that in only two villages (Khewali and Bhagwatipur) do *maliks* frequently try to force their *jans* to vote for their candidates in the elections. In the other two villages, Chougain and Parsa, this has not been observed to be the modal behaviour of the *maliks*. The *baraka* layer in Khewali and Bhagwatipur is dominated by the families of the non-upper caste cluster, mentioned before. In Chougain and Parsa, *baraka* people are generally from the upper castes. At Khewali and Bhagwatipur, both the *maliks* and *jans* belong to the non-upper caste cluster. Since elections in Bihar (from those of the village *panchayat* to that of the Lok Sabha) are dominated by caste considerations, it seems that the *maliks* of Khewali and Bhagwatipur find it convenient to force their *jans*, who also happen to belong to the same caste cluster, to vote for their candidates. However, this tendency seems to be more pronounced at Bhagwatipur than at Khewali. The *malik-jan* relationship, probably, does not appear to be effective for political mobilisation. At Chougain and Parsa, the modal responses suggest that *maliks* generally keep themselves

Table 7.9 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Maliks** ***Try to Force their Jans to Vote for their Candidates in Elections***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	77 (26.1)	98 (33.2)	120 (40.7)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	29 (50.9)	9 (15.8)	19 (33.3)	—	—	57
	Parsa	6 (7.2)	75 (90.4)	2 (2.4)	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	114 (94.2)	2 (1.7)	3 (2.5)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

aloof during elections. In these villages, the *maliks* do not belong to the same caste cluster as that of their *jans*. Hence, they find it inconvenient to force the *jans* to vote for their candidates. It seems that *malik-jan* nexus of control (that belongs to the economic sphere of relationships) fails to work in the political sphere.

Table 7.10 illustrates the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the second item. It is obvious from this table that in the villages studied in Mithila, the *jans* have to side with their *maliks* frequently whenever they require their support to fight cases with others in the law courts. In Bhojpur, this does not appear to be the modal trend. In Mithila, it seems that the *maliks* still exercise enough control over their *jans* and successfully get them to their side in their conflicts with others. They are able to do so because in a conflict with someone else their personal interests are involved. In the sphere of political mobilisation their personal interests are not directly involved. They do not consider it in their own interests to coerce the *jans* for someone else, particularly in a situation when caste plays a vital role in political mobilisation. It should be pointed out here that the pattern of responses that Table 7.10 presents is similar to that indicated in Table 6.5 in the context of *bataidari*. The coercion of *jans* in this context seems to be greater in Mithila than in Bhojpur.

Table 7.11 contains the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the third item. It is obvious from this table that the *maliks* in all the villages under study frequently try to keep their *jans* always in debt. This trend appears to be typical of the *maliks*

Table 7.10 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Jans** ***have to Side with their*** **Maliks** ***Whenever they Require their Support to Fight Cases with Others in Law Courts***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	56 (19.0)	210 (71.2)	29 (9.8)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	20 (35.1)	29 (50.9)	8 (2.4)	—	—	57
	Parsa	76 (91.6)	5 (6.0)	2 (2.4)	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	102 (84.3)	14 (11.6)	3 (2.5)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 7.11 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Maliks** ***Try to Keep their*** **Jans** ***always in Debt***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	194 (65.76)	55 (18.6)	46 (15.59)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	39 (68.4)	11 (19.3)	7 (12.3)	—	—	57
	Parsa	70 (84.3)	8 (9.6)	5 (6.0)	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	115 (95.0)	2 (1.7)	2 (1.7)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

in both the regions of Bhojpur and Mithila. In Mithila, however, the trend seems to be more pronounced than in Bhojpur. The table indicates that the *maliks* tend to retain control over their *jans* by exploiting their economic condition. Tables 7.7 and 7.8 indicate the extent of control that *maliks* generally have over their *jans* by exploiting their economic condition. The latter have to work for their *maliks* whenever their *maliks* like. Further, the *jans* can work for others only when their *maliks* do not require their labour. This control can be exercised over *jans* possibly because they always remain in debt to their *maliks*. Those who are in debt are easily forced by their creditors to work for them. Keeping a

jan in debt, therefore, seems to be the most effective means of exercising control over him. This may be the reason why the practice of *mahajani* is adopted by the *maliks* even in the sphere of *janouri*.

Conflict

The items included in the schedule in the context of conflict were: *jans* protest against their *maliks*; and *jans* even resort to violence while protesting against their *maliks*. The findings regarding these items follow.

Table 7.12 contains the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the first item. It is obvious from this table that in Bhojpur, *jans seldom* protest against their *maliks*. This has been observed to be the modal behaviour of *jans* at both Chougain and Khewali. In Mithila, the situation appears to be quite different from that of Bhojpur. At both Parsa and Bhagwatipur, *jans* never protest against their *maliks*. This seems to be the modal behaviour of *jans* in the context of conflict against their *maliks*. However, within Mithila, this trend appears to be stronger in the satellite village than in the feeder one. In the former, the extent of *maliks'* control over *jans* would be more than in the feeder one.

Table 7.12 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Jans** ***Protest against their*** **Malik**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	39- (13.2)	207 (70.2)	48 (16.3)	—	1 (0.3)	295
	Khewali		41 (71.9)	16 (28.1)	—	—	57
	Parsa		16 (19.2)	67 (80.7)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	5 (4.1)	44 (36.4)	69 (57.0)	1 (0.8)	2 (1.7)	121

It should be mentioned that in course of data collection, it was made clear by the villagers of each village under study that the *jans* would never protest individually against their *maliks*. A *jan* would

probably negotiate the terms and conditions of *janouri* with his *malik* by doing *darbar* rather than by protesting. However, voices could be raised against *maliks* in a group as there is little chance for any individual *jan* to be identified as a *malik's* opponent in such a situation. And no *jan* would generally like to incur the displeasure of his *malik* by declaring himself as his opponent while he is dependent on him.

Therefore, *jans* would protest only collectively. In Bhojpur, they do protest collectively at times. However, in Mithila, the modal responses in the villages studied indicate that they do not raise their voice in protest against their *maliks* even collectively. In Mithila, the upper caste groups (who also happen to dominate the upper layer in the village) have successfully exercised their hegemony over the rest for quite a long time. It seems that the bottom rung of the population (to which *jans* belong) still continues to be dominated and find it convenient not to challenge the supremacy of the *maliks*.

Table 7.13 presents the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the second item. It is obvious from this table that in the feeder village in Bhojpur, *jans* seldom resort to violence while protesting against the *maliks*. At Khewali, a satellite village, the modal response indicates that *jans* never resort to violence against their *maliks*. A satellite village is generally more isolated than a feeder one. Occupational diversity is much less in the former than in the latter. Agricultural occupations remain virtually the sole source of livelihood of the people residing in a satellite village. The control of *maliks* on the *jans* in such a village may be stronger than in a feeder village. Besides, at Khewali both the *maliks* and *jans* belong to the same caste cluster. Possibly, due to these two factors—the caste affiliation of the *jans* and *maliks* and the relatively high control of the latter over the former—the *jans* at Khewali never resort to violence while protesting against the *maliks*. At Chougain, there is no caste affiliation betwen the *jans* and *maliks*. The *maliks* are not supposed to have the same amount of control over the *jans* as could be expected at Khewali (which is a satellite village). Besides, it has been observed earlier that, historically, Bhojpur has a strong propensity towards violence (Hetukar Jha *et al.*, 1985, p. 24). The polarisation between the upper and non-upper caste clusters is also quite sharply established (*ibid.*). These factors probably make it possible for *jans* to resort

Table 7.13 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Jans** ***Even Resort to Violence While Protesting against*** **Maliks**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	21 (7.1)	197 (66.8)	76 (25.8)	—	1 (0.3)	295
	Khewali		13 (22.8)	44 (77.2)	—	—	57
	Parsa	3 (3.6)	18 (21.7)	62 (74.7)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	4 (3.3)	39 (32.2)	76 (62.8)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

to violence at times in Chougain while protesting against their *maliks*.

In Mithila, the modal responses in both the villages under study indicate that the *jans* never resort to violence against their *maliks*. According to Table 7.12, they generally do not even protest against the *maliks*. Since *maliks* still happen to be in a position to be able to exercise their hegemony over the *jans* so successfully that even protest is not generally voiced against them, the chances of violence flaring up against them appear to be quite slim.

Tables 7.12 and 7.13 thus indicate that *jans*, if at all they have to protest, protest collectively and only occasionally in Bhojpur. While protesting, they seldom resort to violence. In Mithila, protesting does not seem to be desirable to them. The *malik-jan* relationship thus appears to be so dominated by the subjection of *jans* to the control of *maliks* that protest either remains submerged at the latent level or, if it is manifested, the manifestation seldom occurs.

Patronage

The items included in the schedule regarding patronage were:

1. *Maliks* defend their *jans* when they are threatened or abused by others, considering this an assault on their own prestige.
2. *Maliks* readily help their *jans* when they face any crisis.

Table 7.14 contains the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the first item. It is obvious from this table that in the villages of Mithila under study, it appears to be typical of the *maliks* to defend their *jans* in case they are threatened or abused by others. If the *jans* are abused, their *maliks* consider it a matter of their prestige. In Bhojpur, only in Chougain does this trend seem to be modal. In Khewali, the responses are not significantly distributed in the categories of *F* and *S* ($X^2 = 1.88$) and, therefore, it is difficult to suppose that this trend is typical here. Table 7.14 indicates clearly that the trend of protecting *jans* is much more pronounced among the *maliks* in Mithila than among those in Bhojpur.

Table 7.14 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Maliks** ***Defend their*** **Jans** ***when they are Threatened or Abused by Others, Considering this an Assault on their Own Prestige***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	206 (69.8)	84 (28.5)	5 (1.7)	—	—	295
	Khewali	26 (45.6)	17 (29.8)	14 (24.6)	—	—	57
	Parsa	81 (97.6)	2 (2.4)	—	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	98 (81.0)	20 (16.5)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 7.15 presents the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the second item. It is obvious from this table that the *maliks* in the villages of Mithila *frequently* help their *jans* in a crisis. In Bhojpur, again, the responses are so distributed in the categories (X^2 for responses under *F* and *S* in Chougain = 1.90 and the same for responses under *F*, *S* and *N* at Khewali = 1.36) that it is difficult to decide what exactly the modal trend is. However, as was indicated in Table 7.14, the *maliks* of Mithila tend to be more generous towards their *jans* than those of Bhojpur. In Mithila, the trend towards exploitation of *jans* (see Tables 7.9, 7.10 and 7.11) by their *maliks* has been found to be stronger than in Bhojpur. It seems that in regions where there is a high degree of exploitation, patronage is also extended liberally.

Table 7.15 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Maliks** ***Readily Help their*** **Jans** ***when they Face a Crisis***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	150 (50.8)	127 (43.1)	18 (6.1)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	18 (31.6)	23 (40.4)	16 (28.1)	—	—	57
	Parsa	75 (90.4)	8 (9.6)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	110 (90.9)	7 (5.8)	3 (2.5)	—	1 (0.8)	121

Summary and Discussion

Norms of Etiquette

Tables 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 contain data regarding the norms of etiquette prevailing in the sphere of *janouri*. The first two tables relate to the behaviour of *maliks* towards *jans* while Tables 7.3 and 7.4 relate to that of *jans* towards their *maliks*. As far as the *jans* are concerned, the *maliks* have been observed to use non-honorific (even derogatory, not abusive) terms of address for them. This trend appears to be more pronounced in Mithila than in Bhojpur, as was observed in the context of the *baraka-chottaka/ nanh* relationship (see Table 4.7) and also in the context of the institution of *mahajani* (Table 5.5). The behaviour of *jans* towards their *maliks*, as indicated in Tables 7.3 and 7.4, conforms to the *darbari* style in both Bhojpur and Mithila. *Darbari* behaviour, thus, appears to be typical, characterising the norms of etiquette followed by the *jans/halwahas* in relation to their *maliks*.

Mode of Operation

Regarding the way *janouri* is practised, the following account appears to be, by and large, true of the non-tribal zone of Bihar:

> [Jans] are allotted little pieces of land . . . for their own cultivation and, during agricultural seasons, they receive wages for

their daily work at par with daily wage labourers. In some areas, the landlord demands a share of what is produced on the allotted land, but the general practice is that the landlord, having advanced the seeds takes back one-and-a-half times the amount advanced when the crop is harvested. Debt burdens force them to stay attached to the landlord, in some case for generations (*Report*, 1986, p. 54).

It seems that this practice has not undergone any significant change since at least the last century.[5] The attachment of *jans* to their *maliks* has continued for generations and therefore, perhaps, *jans* are known by the identity of their respective *maliks*. This sort of dependence of *jans* on their *maliks* seems to be perpetuated by the control exercised by the latter on the former. The mode of operation of *janouri*, as pointed out before, is characterised by the relationship of control—control exercised by the *maliks* and dependence introjected by the *jans*.

Exploitation

The *malik-jan* nexus has not been found to be effective in the sphere of political mobilisation. It seems that there has been too much politicisation on caste lines. Even those belonging to the bottom layer of society are conscious enough to resist the influence of *maliks* in this context. Caste has enjoyed a great deal of autonomy in rural society for a long time. The caste *panchayat* of even the lower castes has been observed to be operating without interference from anyone in the village. Even upper caste people in the village do not generally intervene in the caste affairs of others who live in the same village. The caste nexus at the inter-village level

[5] See the 'village notes' of Louhar, No. 62, Pargana-Arrah, Thana-Arrah, Distt-Shahabad; Bargaon, No. 402, Pargana-Baswak, Thana-Bihar, Distt-Patna; Maharail, No. 269, Pargana-Gopalpur, Thana-Madhubani, Distt-Darbhanga. The report No. 236G, dated Bankipur, 2 June 1888 (confidential) from John Boxwell, Commissioner of the Patna Division to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, also throws much light on the mode of operation of the practice of *janouri* in Bihar during the nineteenth century. The report describes the way control was exercised by the *maliks* on *jans*. It also records the caste composition of the latter (see *Report*, 1888). The findings of this study and the observation cited in *Report* (1986) in this context indicate almost the same trend that was reported by John Boxwell.

operates virtually without any interference of intra-village inter-caste relationships of the different institutions (such as, *bataidari* and *mahajani*).[6] Since caste has been increasingly incorporated as a forum for political mobilisation (Rudolph and Rudolph, 1967, pp. 64–67), decision-making regarding voting might be considered to be an intra-caste affair and, hence, beyond the jurisdiction of the *malik-jan* nexus.

However, outside the political sphere, the *maliks* exploit their *jans* by using them in their favour in the law courts. This is particularly true in Mithila. In Bhojpur, this does not appear to be the modal behaviour. The *maliks* of Mithila, perhaps, exert much more control over their *jans* than those in *Bhojpur*. In both the regions under study, the tendency to keep *jans* in debt has been found to be typical of the *maliks*. This probably facilitates the continuation of the latter's control over the *jans*.

In Bhojpur, this control seems to be confined to the institution of *janouri* only. Beyond this, the *jans* do not have to side with their *maliks* whenever they require their support to fight cases with others in the law courts. In fact, the modal responses in Chougain and Khewali (Table 7.10) indicate that they seldom do so. This suggests that in Bhojpur, the *jans* do not allow *maliks* to extend their control beyond the jurisdiction of the *janouri* network. This is not true of Mithila. Here, the *maliks* exploit and coerce the *jans* in spheres where their personal interests are directly involved. The exploitation and coercion of *jans*, therefore, seems to be greater in Mithila than in Bhojpur.

Conflict

It is clear from the foregoing that the chief feature characterising the mode of operation of *janouri* is the control that the *maliks* exercise over their *jans*. Further, the exploitation of the *jans* seems to be positively correlated with the control exercised by the former. In Mithila, exploitation is greater because, perhaps, the

[6] Louis Dumont refers to the studies done by Gough, Srinivas, Mayer, Lewis and Bailey in this context. The studies indicate that the internal affairs of a caste are duly recognised by others who generally consider it beyond their jurisdiction to intervene, unless asked to do so (see Dumont 1972, pp. 227–28).

maliks have been culturally and economically more dominant throughout the historical periods than in Bhojpur. Conflict between the *jan* and *malik* also seems to be correlated with the control exercised by the latter. As pointed out before, the *malik-jan* relationship at the inter-personal level is so greatly dominated by the subservience of the *jan* that there is virtually no scope left for the latter to raise his voice in protest. However, collectively he may protest against his *malik*, but this happens only at times. This is true of Bhojpur only. In a collectivity, an individual's protest does not remain his personal one; rather, it becomes the protest of the group and, thus, the zone of conflict is removed from the inter-personal level to the inter-group level. This helps to maintain the *jan's* pledge of subservience to his *malik* at the inter-personal level and, at the same time, makes room for protest to emerge. In Bhojpur, as described before, the non-upper caste groups have never submitted themselves to the hegemony of the upper caste groups. Society at the village level is generally divided horizontally and violence has been a visible feature of the style of life since long (Hetukar Jha *et al.*, 1985, p. 24). Under the circumstances, the *maliks*' superiority remains questionable, at least from the cultural or ideological points of view (*ibid.*, p. 74) and this weakens their control over the *jans*. Hence it is possible for the *jans* (who belong to the non-upper caste groups) to protest against the *maliks* (who are generally from the upper castes) and also to resort to violence at times.

In Mithila, the superiority of the upper caste groups has been acknowledged even culturally and ideologically for long (Hetukar Jha, 1985, p. 74). This, possibly, reinforces the control they have over their *jans*. This control appears to have been so greatly legitimised that the typical trend among the *jans* in the context of conflict between the *maliks* and *jans* is never to protest or talk of violence.

Patronage

The data regarding patronage extended to the *jans* by the *maliks* (Tables 7.14 and 7.15) indicate in clear terms that the *maliks* in the villages of Mithila seem to be much more generous towards their *jans* than those in Bhojpur. In Mithila, it is typical of *maliks* to protect and help their *jans* in crisis. In Bhojpur, this has not been

observed to be so. In Mithila, a village is generally divided vertically (Hetukar Jha *et al.*, 1985, p. 74). In Bhojpur, it is horizontal division that generally marks a village (*ibid.*). As discussed before, in the context of patronage under *bataidari*, the *maliks* of a village which is vertically split may be much more generous towards their *jans* than the *maliks* of the village which is horizontally split. The variation in the historical conditions of the two regions under study may have led to the variation in the nature of the intra-village division of these regions (*ibid.*, pp. 17–57). This may have affected the *maliks*' behaviour region-wise regarding the extent of patronage extended by them towards their *jans*. Thus, the extent of hegemony exercised by the *maliks* seems to be positively associated with the extent of exploitation of the *jans*. Interestingly, there is less protest by *jans* in regions where their coercion and exploitation are more pronounced. It seems that the exploitation and coercion of *jans* are positively correlated with the patronage extended to them.

EIGHT

Jajmani *Relationships*

Ever since the publication of W.H. Wiser's *The Hindu Jajmani System* (1958, first edition 1936), the *jajmani* system has drawn the attention of social anthropologists and sociologists. There is a substantial amount of anthropological literature on this subject (Kessinger, 1974, p. 56n), indicating its popularity in the description of inter-caste relations at the level of the village.[1] According to Dumont (1972, p. 38), 'It has become common practice to apply the term "the *jajmani* system" to the system corresponding to the prestations and counter-prestations by which the castes as a whole are bound together in the village, and which is more or less universal in India.' This is a sort of patron-client relationship. The word *jajman* designates a patron who is served in accordance with the local custom by a number of clients known by various terms, such as *praja*, *pauni* and *kam karnevala* (*ibid.*, p. 139). The universality of this network has been recognised as it has been observed to be widely practised, notwithstanding variations, since long (Kushner, 1967, p. 35).

In Bihar, Grierson prepared a fairly long note on the regional variations in the practice of this system in the second half of the last century (Grierson, 1885, pp. 315–20). Terms such as *pawani*, *pauni* (or *pauniya* and *pawanipasari*) were used to designate clients

[1] N.K. Bose also prepared a descriptive account of this system based on material drawn from Orissa, Maharashtra, Punjab, U.P. and Bengal (see N.K. Bose, 1975, pp. 104–7).

and the *jajmani* system was known as *pal, hari*, and so on (*ibid.*, pp. 315–16). The 'village notes' prepared during the first two decades of this century also throw much light on this. The 'village notes' of almost all the feeder villages mention the details regarding the yearly payment (in kind) made to *pawanis* for the services rendered by them. Given this background of the existence of this system at the village level, we can consider it an important constituent of the primary level structure of village (which is the focus of this work). Here, we shall examine this system (which is a major issue of discussion among anthropologists, see Dumont, 1972, p. 144) by exploring the typical styles of behaviour of the *jajman* and the *pawani/purohit* in relation to each other regarding two issues: mode of operation of *jajmani*; and exploitation of the *pawani/purohit*. An issue-wise discussion of the findings follows.

Mode of Operation of Jajmani

The items included in the schedule regarding the mode of operation of *jajmani* were:

1. The *jajmani* relationship is considered to be family heritage by each of the *jajmans* and *pawanis/purohits*.
2. Families in a village remain distributed among the *pawanis/purohits*.
3. A *pawani/purohit* may serve even as someone else's *jajman*.
4. A *jajman* avails of the services of even someone else's *pawani/purohit* at his discretion.
5. A *pawani/purohit* who has enough income resources also does *jajmani*.
6. Even the most dominant *jajmans* in the village have to depend upon only those *pawanis/purohits* who have been serving them for the last several generations for the performance of religious rituals and ceremonies.

The findings, item-wise, are discussed below.

Table 8.1 contains the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the first item. It is obvious from this table that the *jajmani* relationship is considered to be family heritage both by the *jajmans* and *pawani/purohits* in both the regions of Bhojpur and

Table 8.1 ***Responses to the Item: The* Jajmani *Relationship is Considered to be Family Heritage by each of the* Jajmans *and* Pawanis/Purohits**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	219 (74.2)	66 (22.4)	10 (3.4)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	48 (84.2)	9 (15.8)	—	—	—	57
	Parsa	83 (100.0)	—	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	72 (59.5)			48 (39.7)	1 (0.8)	121

Mithila. This indicates that this relationship continues from generation to generation, and is traditionally sanctified.

It should be noted that a sizeable number of respondents (39.7 per cent) at Bhagwatipur were found to be ignorant of this. It seems that the *jajmani* system is not as widely practised in the feeder villages as in the satellite ones.

Tables 8.2 presents the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the second item. It is clear from this table that the families in a village are not served haphazardly by the *pawanis/purohits*. These families are, in fact, distributed among the *pawanis/purohits*. The former are termed *jajmans* (not necessarily by the villagers). This distribution of *jajmans* among the *pawanis/purohits* is also traditionally laid down. If one *pawani/purohit* is found to be serving ten families in a village, it means that his family has been serving those ten families for many generations. The *jajmans*, in this case, are virtually at the disposal of his family. Other *jajman* families are similarly distributed.

Table 8.3 illustrates the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to the third item. It is clear from this table that the modal response at each of the villages studied is that a *pawani/purohit* never serves other's *jajmans*. However, it is difficult to presume this to be typical of the *pawanis/purohits* of the feeder villages. At Chougain, the frequency of responses under the category *S* is not significantly different from that of the category *N* ($X^2 = 3.27$). At Bhagwatipur, about 40 per cent of the respondents have been found to be ignorant of the functioning of the

Table 8.2 ***Responses to the Item: Families in a Village Remain Distributed among the Pawanis/Purohits***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	256 (86.8)	34 (11.5)	5 (1.7)	—	—	295
	Khewali	56 (98.2)	—	1 (1.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	83 (100.0)	—	—	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	72 (59.5)			48 (39.7)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 8.3 ***Responses to the Item: A* Pawani/Purohit *Serves even Someone Else's* Jajman**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	38 (12.9)	114 (38.6)	143 (48.5)	—	—	295
	Khewali	8 (14.0)	4 (7.0)	45 (78.9)	—	—	57
	Parsa		2 (2.4)	81 (97.6)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	91 (15.7)	1 (0.8)	52 (43.0)	48 (39.7)	1 (0.8)	121

jajmani system. In the circumstances, one may suppose that in the feeder villages, the *pawani/purohits* do not strictly adhere to their obligation of following the norms of distribution of *jajmans*. At the satellite villages, however, these norms appear to be quite strictly followed.

Table 8.4 presents the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the fourth item. The data of this table also indicate a similar trend as the previous item (Table 8.3). At the satellite villages, the *jajmans* follow the norms of distribution and generally *never* avail themselves of the services of those *pawanis/purohits* who are supposed to serve others. In the feeder villages, this does not

Table 8.4 ***Responses to the Item: A* Jajman *Avails himself of the Services of even Someone Else's* Pawani/Purohit *at his Discretion***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	26 (8.8)	167 (56.6)	102 (34.2)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	4 (7.0)	3 (5.3)	50 (87.7)	—	—	57
	Parsa			83 (100.0)	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	17 (14.0)	1 (0.8)	54 (44.6)	48 (39.7)	1 (0.8)	121

appear to be typical of the *jajmans*. At Chougain, the modal response is that they seldom pick *pawanis/purohits* of their choice. At Bhagwatipur, too, about 40 per cent of the responses are in the category *DK*. Only about 45 per cent of the responses were recorded under the category *N*. The difference between these two does not seem to be sufficient enough to suppose that the typical conduct of *jajmans* is never to avail himself of the services of those *pawanis/purohits* who serve others.

Table 8.5 contains the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the fifth item. It is obvious from this table that even those *pawanis/purohits* who have enough income resources frequently do *jajmani*. This has been found to be the modal behaviour in each of the villages studied. However, the trend appears to be more pronounced in the satellite villages than in the feeder ones. It seems that the *jajmani* relationship is taken to be as good as any religious ritual whose performance is a must, irrespective of the socio-economic conditions of the parties to this relationships at any particular time.

Table 8.6 contains the region and village-wise distribution of responses to the sixth item. The data in this table clearly indicate that even those *jajmans* who are the most dominant in the village have to depend only upon their *pawanis/purohits* for the performance of religious rituals and ceremonies. This has been found to be typical of the *jajmani* relationship even in the feeder villages under study.

It seems that the *jajmani* relationship is considered to be an

Table 8.5 ***Responses to the Item: A*** **Pawani/Purohit** ***who has enough Income Resources also does*** **Jajmani**

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	187 (63.4)	101 (34.2)	7 (2.4)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	50 (87.7)	2 (3.5)	5 (8.7)	—	—	57
	Parsa	82 (98.8)	1 (1.2)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	70 (57.9)	2 (1.7)		48 (39.7)	1 (0.8)	121

Table 8.6 ***Responses to the Item: Even the Most Dominant*** **Jajmans** ***have to depend upon only those*** **Pawanis/Purohits** ***who have been Serving them for the Last Several Generations for the Performance of Religious Rituals and Ceremonies***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
	Chougain	228 (77.3)	55 (18.6)	12 (4.1)	—	—	295
Bhojpur							
	Khewali	55 (96.5)	1 (1.8)	1 (1.8)	—	—	57
	Parsa	81 (97.6)	2 (2.4)	—	—	—	83
Mithila							
	Bhagwatipur	73 (60.3)	—	—	47 (38.8)	1 (0.8)	121

integral part of the sacred order. The religious ceremonies even in the families of the most dominant men cannot be held unless the *pawanis/purohits* (at whose disposal they have remained for the last many generations according to the norms of distribution traditionally followed in this context) participate in them to the extent that local tradition requires them to do so. Without their participation, the legitimacy of the ceremony is questioned. It seems that the *jajmans*, even in the feeder villages, cannot violate the norms of distribution in this context by availing of the services of *pawanis/purohits* of their choice (as generally they can in other contexts, see Table 8.4).

Exploitation

The item included in the schedule in the context of exploitation was: a *jajman* tries to avail of the services of his *pawani/purohit* free of charge. Table 8.7 presents the distribution of responses, region and village-wise, to this item.

Table 8.7 ***Responses to the Item:*** **Jajmans** ***Try to Avail themselves of the Services of their*** **Pawanis/Purohits** ***for Free***

Region	*Village*	*F*	*S*	*N*	*DK*	*NA*	*Total*
Bhojpur	Chougain	47 (15.9)	97 (32.9)	150 (50.8)	—	1 (0.3)	295
	Khewali	5 (8.7)	6 (10.5)	46 (80.7)	—	—	57
	Parsa	1 (1.2)	4 (4.8)	78 (94.0)	—	—	83
Mithila	Bhagwatipur	2 (1.7)	1 (0.6)	69 (57.0)	48 (39.7)	1 (0.8)	121

It is obvious from this table that the modal response in each village under study is that the *jajmans* never try to avail themselves of the services of their *pawanis/purohits* free of cost. It appears that the bond of custom regarding the *jajmani* relationship is so strong that the *jajmans* generally never depart from their obligations even in their own interests. However, this trend appears to be more pronounced in the satellite villages than in the feeder ones. The norms of distribution seem to be relatively weak in the latter (see Tables 8.3 and 8.4). Due to this, there might be some competition among the *pawanis/purohits* to increase their clientele. This might provide the *jajmans* an opportunity to exploit the *pawanis/purohits* in their own interest. However, exploitation has not been found to be typical of *jajmans* even in the feeder villages.

Summary and Discussion

In the course of qualitative data collection in the villages, the *jajmani* system was found to be in existence in each village. The norms of

etiquette among the *baraka jajmans* and their *pawanis* were observed to be of the *darbari* style, similar to the norms of etiquette among the *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* discussed before (see Chapter 4). The *purohits* were also found to behave as the *darbaris* of *baraka jajmans*. However, while interacting with their *chhotaka/nanh* clients, they were accorded *darbari* behaviour by the latter. Since the norms of etiquette prevalent among the *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* were also observed to be followed by the *jajmans* and their *pawanis/purohits* (belonging to the former categories), it may be assumed that in the transaction of *jajmani*, the norms of etiquette being followed are virtually those prevailing within and between the categories of hierarchy (i.e., *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh*) constituting the village. The *jajmani* system includes people of the *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* categories and therefore, perhaps, it also incorporates their norms of etiquette. Hence, no item was included in the schedule to collect quantitive data in this context. However, in the context of the distribution of prestations and counter-prestations at the inter-caste level, the system seems to be governed by its own tradition (Tables 8.1 and 8.2).

This tradition appears to be relatively loose in the feeder villages (see Tables 8.3 and 8.4). As discussed before, these villages are more complex than the satellite ones. They are also more open to external influences. There is more occupational diversity in such villages. Regarding the *jajmani* system, Dumont (1972, pp. 138–39) writes,

> To a large extent it is a question of natural as opposed to monetary economy. It is also a question of the closed economy of the Indian village in which essential goods and especially services are found, used to be found, either on the spot or in the immediate vicinity.

Satellite villages are more closed than the feeder ones; the natural economy may also be presumed to be more pronounced in the satellite villages than in the feeder ones. The obligations of *jajmans* towards their *pawanis/purohits* and vice versa have also been observed to be followed more strictly in the satellite villages (see Tables 8.3 and 8.4) than in the feeder ones. Dumont's contention is, thus, supported by our observations. However, as the

satellite category has been found to be much more numerous than the feeder one in both Bhojpur and Mithila, one may suppose that the modal patterns prevalent in the villages of the former could simultaneously be taken to be typical of the regions under study as well. The *jajmani* system may, therefore, be held to be a modal feature of village life in both Mithila and Bhojpur.

Regard for tradition and family heritage seems to be fairly strong in the satellite villages in this context. Even those *pawanis/purohits* who have adequate income resources and do not have to depend upon the prestations offered by their *jajmans*, do *jajmani* frequently at each of the villages studied. This has been observed to be their typical behaviour. However, this trend appears to be more pronounced in the satellite villages (see Table 8.5). According to Beidelman, the ritual aspect is secondary in the *jajmani* system; what remains essentially is the economic aspect (Dumont, 1972, p. 145). However, our findings do not seem to conform to this view of Beidelman; rather, they indicate the primacy of the ritual aspect. This is further supported by the data given in Table 8.6. Even the most dominant *jajmans* have to depend only on those families of *pawanis/purohits* who have been serving them for the last many generations for the performance of religious rituals and ceremonies. The norms of distribution of *jajmans* among the *pawanis/purohits* are strictly adhered to even by the most dominant *jajmans* of the feeder villages too for the performance of religious rituals and ceremonies. In the feeder villages, generally, these norms have been found to be a little loose, as discussed before (Tables 8.3 and 8.4). But in the context of religious performance, the typical behaviour of even the most dominant *jajmans* is to follow the norms of distribution and depend only upon those *pawanis/purohits* who have had *jajmani* relationships with them for the last many generations. It seems that the violation of traditional partnership in a *jajmani* relationship undermines the sanctity of holding religious ceremonies in the village. This apparently leads to the loss of legitimacy of the ceremony performed and also to the loss of prestige of the *jajman* concerned. No *jajman*, even if he is dominant, would like to take such a risk. The *jajmani* relationship, thus, seems to have been accorded some sort of religious sanctity which reinforces its ritual aspect. The importance of the ritual aspect of this system has also been taken note of by Orenstein (*ibid.*).

Perhaps, it is because of the prominence of the ritual aspect in the *jajmani* relationship that the exploitation of *pawanis/purohits* has not been observed to be the typical behaviour of *jajmans* at any of the villages studied (Table 8.7). The latent function of this system (due to the prominence of the ritual aspect) might be to contribute to inter-caste cohesion in the village or locality. However, inter-caste interdependence manifested in the context of the *jajmani* relationship seems to be ritualised and, therefore, not much scope is left for variation in relationship between *jajmans* and *pawanis/purohits*. The typical relationship characterising the *jajmani* system is the relationship of cooperation (or interdependence); the typical style of cooperation is the one that has been ritualised by tradition.

NINE

Conclusion

Our findings regarding each of the institutions studied have already been discussed. In this chapter, I shall present the salient features of the primary level structure of village society both in Bhojpur and Mithila.

The families belonging to the upper strata of village society (known generally as *baraka* families) have very different norms of etiquette from those of the *chhotaka/nanh* families. The use of honorific forms of address for both the seniors and juniors has been found to be typical among the former in Mithila. In Bhojpur, this is typical of the *baraka* families of only the feeder villages which have mainly upper caste families at the *baraka* level. However, juniors of *baraka* families in both Bhojpur and Mithila frequently maintain discipline before their seniors. These norms of etiquette, thus, reflect the fairly deep orientation of intra-familial hierarchy among the *baraka* families (particularly in Mithila).

Among the *chhotaka/nanh* families, the use of non-honorific (not disrespectful) forms of address for seniors has been found to be typical in both Bhojpur and Mithila. The juniors, however, are disrespectfully addressed (their names are vulgarised when they are addressed by their seniors). It seems that some sort of intra-familial hierarchy also marks the interpersonal relationships in the context of norms of etiquette among the *chhotaka/nanh* families.

Thus, the sense of hierarchy—of being senior/superior and/or junior/inferior seems to be greatly ingrained in the various layers of village society. Even within a *baraka* family where members are

senior or junior on the basis of age or generation (otherwise they all have the same status of being *baraka*), behaviour styles are formal and deferential. In a situation in which they encounter people who are inferior or subordinate to them in terms of socio-economic status, the style of behaviour accorded to them is so deferential that it tends to be *darbari* in nature. *Darbari* behaviour is characterised by a display of submission by the subordinate or inferior to the superior by using honorific forms of address (such as *sarkar, huzoor, malik* or *mai-baap*) for the latter, expressing unquestionable loyalty for them and by making such non-verbal gestures as those symbolising their status vis-a-vis the status of the superior (for example, sitting before them on the ground when they are sitting on chairs or *gaddis*).

This style of behaviour is typical of the norms of etiquette followed by the *chhotaka/nanh* in their interaction with the *baraka* people in all the villages under study except Khewali (a satellite village in Bhojpur). At Khewali, though the speech behaviour of the *chhotaka/nanh* does not conform to *darbari* style, their non-verbal gestures reflect this style quite vividly. This is a satellite village in which the upper layer is dominated by non-upper caste households. In Bhojpur, upper castes could never exercise their hegemony to the same extent as those of Mithila.

In Bhojpur, the *darbari* style of behaviour has been observed to be typical of the *chhotaka/nanh* at Chougain where the *baraka* layer is dominated by the erstwhile big *zamindar* families belonging to the upper caste cluster. They are accorded *darbari* behaviour perhaps because of their long heritage of *zamindari* status by virtue of which they still dominate the village. The role of caste in this context might be only marginal. In Mithila, it seems, the hegemony of the upper caste cluster was so vigorous that it came to be identified with that of the upper (*baraka*) layer in village society. Whoever joined this layer began to be treated more or less in the same manner as an upper caste man of the *baraka* group. It is perhaps due to this legacy that, even at Bhagwatipur, the non-upper caste households which dominate the upper layer are accorded the same *darbari* treatment as the *baraka* people belonging to the upper caste cluster at Parsa.

This, however, has not been observed to be the case in Bhojpur. Here, the upper castes did not exercise their hegemony to the extent that it could have secured them the status of being *baraka* in

general and could also have simultaneoulsy raised their prestige in the eyes of others enough to be treated in *darbari* style. It seems that only big *zamindar* families (which had extensive *zamindaris* in the locality and commanded enough power by virtue of holding them during *zamindari* days), were accorded *darbari* treatment. The tradition appears to be continuing even now and, therefore, the *baraka* people of Chougain are treated in *darbari* style while those of Khewali are treated in a style that is only partially *darbari* (the speech behaviour of *chhotaka/nanh* at this village does not conform to *darbari* style, only non-verbal gestures relate to it).

The image of the *baraka* men of Chougain, thus, appears to be quite different from that of the *baraka* men of Khewali. The people's perception of *baraka* in Bhojpur varies in accordance with the historical and socio-economic variation in the amount of power held by them. For one to be a *baraka* man or to remain a *baraka* man depends upon the amount of time power is held by him in the socio-economic sphere. This kind of dependence of *baraka* status on power seems to be so institutionalised that even the intra-familial norms of etiquette at the *baraka* layer tend to vary as there is variation in the nature of *baraka* people. For example, at Chougain, the speech behaviour among the *baraka* families in the context of norms of etiquette has been observed to be honorific. But this is not so at Khewali. However, at both the villages, as pointed out before, the juniors among the *baraka* families have been observed to maintain discipline before their seniors.

In Mithila, *baraka* men in both the villages of Bhagwatipur and Parsa have been found to be given the same kind of *darbari* treatment by the *chhotaka/nanh*. Even the intra-familial norms of etiquette have been observed to be more or less the same among the *baraka* families of both these villages. As far as socio-economic power is concerned, the *baraka* men of Parsa do not wield as much power as those of Bhagwatipur. In Mithila, thus, the institutionalisation of *baraka* status seems to have occurred over time in such a manner that the present variation in socio-economic power among the *baraka* families does not affect the norms of etiquette prevalent among them and followed by others in relation to them.

In Bhojpur, the consideration of power seems to be deeply associated with the understanding of status by both the *baraka* people and others. Hence, the variation in the typical styles of the

intra-familial norms of etiquette among *baraka* people and the inter-personal norms of etiquette between them and the *chhotaka/nanh*. This is also supported by our findings regarding *mahajani* and *janouri* relationships.

The modal pattern of the norms of etiquette followed by *chhotaka/nanh* debtors both in Mithila and Bhojpur in relation to their *mahajans* appears to be *darbari*. Similarly, in the sphere of *janouri* relationships, the same style has been found to be typical of the norms of etiquette followed by the *jans/halwahas* in their interaction with the *maliks* both in Bhojpur and Mithila. Since the *mahajans* and *maliks* both belong to the *baraka* layer, one may suppose that the style prevalent in the sphere of *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* relationships gets easily extended to the spheres of *mahajani* and *janouri* relationships in Mithila. But, in Bhojpur, this cannot be assumed to be true. Here, the *darbari* style has not been found to be so pronounced in Khewali as in Chougain in the context of the norms of etiquette followed by the *chhotaka/nanh* in relation to the *baraka* people. However, the *chhotaka/nanh* debtors and the *jans/halwahas* of both Chougain and Khewali have been observed to be following the *darbari* style of behaviour frequently in the context of norms of etiquette while interacting with their *mahajans* and *maliks* respectively, who are also *baraka* men of their respective villages. It seems that the *baraka* men who do *mahajani* wield much power and control over their *chhotaka/nanh* debtors. Similarly, the *jans/halwahas* are also subjected to the control of their *maliks*. Therefore, perhaps, even in Khewali, the *darbari* style has been observed to be followed by both *chhotaka/nanh* debtors and *jans/halwahas* in relation to their *mahajans* and *maliks* respectively.

In the context of *bataidari* relations too, the *darbari* style has been found to be the modal style of the norms of etiquette followed by the *bataidars* in relation to their *maliks* in all the villages under study (including Khewali). It seems, thus, that *darbari* behaviour is the typical style characterising the norms of etiquette between a superior/senior and a subordinate/inferior constituting village society both in Mithila and Bhojpur. However, the identity of the superior/senior in Bhojpur appears to be more dependent upon the power held by them whereas in Mithila, it is status that has been observed to be more crucial for their identity. The primary level structure of village society in Bhojpur, thus, seems to be different in this context from that of village society in Mithila. But,

once the identity of the senior/superior as a *baraka* is established, the style of behaviour relating to the norms of etiquette accorded to them by the inferior/subordinate is the same (i.e., *darbari*) in both Bhojpur and Mithila.

The *darbari* style of behaviour seems to have deep roots in Indian history. The tradition of *virudavali* and *prasasti* (which is *darbari* in essence), adopted for addressing the *raja*, can be traced from the ancient period. During the middle ages, the behaviour styles of the royal court began to be extended to the religious sphere. Regarding the *sufi* saints of the period, M. Mujeeb writes that

> it is possible that reverence and excessive faith in the supernatural powers of the sufis heightened the colours, but the picture one forms of the public appearance of a shaikh is very much like that of a royal court. There are no trappings, no exhibition of worldly powers and wealth, but the assembly is dominated by the same feeling of awe, the same compulsion to follow the set pattern of behaviour (1969, pp. 306–7).

Gradually, with the rise of the *bhakti* cult, terms such as *huzoor, sarkar, malik* and *darbar* which were used in the royal court to address the king and his assembly gained currency (see Chaturvedi, 1972, pp. 409, 775, 800–1, 808; S.S. Das, 1947, pp. 266, 325). The names of the saints of this cult were invariably suffixed with the word *dasa* (i.e., slave), signifying the slave of God. It seems that the system of slavery was *sacralised* by them and was projected as ideal in the context of one's relationship with God by holding *kirtans* in public places.

The practice of holding *kirtans* began in the middle ages (particularly in north India) and gradually became popular in the villages.[1] Through *kirtan*, it seems that this ideal (which implied complete devotion or unquestionable loyalty to God and *guru*) along with terms such as *huzoor, malik, sarkar, saheb* and *darbar* used to address God and His representatives reached the masses. The latter might have taken it to be the model behaviour pattern to be adopted in relation to superiors/seniors in general. It may be for this reason that *darbari* behaviour still continues to be the typical style characterising the norms of etiquette followed by the *chhotaka/nanh* in relation to the *baraka* people in the villages. However, as this study indicates, people do *darbar* before a *baraka*

[1] Gopal, Surendra, *Personal Communication*.

man only when they think that their self-interest (of even a petty nature) can be served by doing *darbar*. Loyalty, which was the basis of the extensive adoption of this style of behaviour in the middle ages, seems to have been replaced by self-interest. However, the form of expression (i.e., *darbari* style) remained in vogue, though the content or basis changed in the course of time.[2]

Darbari behaviour is the style of expression of one's loyalty, not self-interest. This style was adopted as, perhaps, it was considered appropriate for the expression of one's loyalty and submission to one's own *guru* and God. This had widespread appeal as a means of securing the *guru's* favour or *kripa*. The belief regarding the effectiveness of this style of behaviour as a means of securing *kripa* in the religious sector perhaps facilitated its extension in the socio-economic sphere as well. To secure the *kripa* of a *baraka* man, the *darbari* style might have proved to be effective as the person being accorded *darbari* behaviour might consider it desirable to be considerate towards one who is doing *darbar*, in the same manner as a *guru* behaves with his devotee. This style, therefore, has proved to be handy enough to use by anyone seeking favour from his superior or, for that matter, from anyone in a position to grant favour. At the same time, those who are superior or superordinate also, perhaps, expect *darbari* behaviour from those who come to seek favours from them. They may tend to grant them favours considering it a desirable gesture in response to their *darbari* behaviour.

The data discussed in this work regarding styles of conflict and its consequences and resolution, institution-wise, indicate differences in the modal patterns followed by the *baraka* people from those followed by the *chhotaka/nanh*. Besides, regional variation also seems to be important in this context. Among the *baraka* people, conflict appears to be more or less a permanent feature of their inter-relationship. However, it generally remains latent. The *baraka* people have been observed to be jockeying with each other. This has been found to be the modal behaviour of the *mahajans* as well.

In Mithila, some trends in this context have been marked as quite different from those in Bhojpur. At the intra-family level, the preference for privacy in everyday life among the *baraka* families has been found to be more prominent in Mithila than in

[2] Short-term self-interest orientation (i.e., personalism) began to grow as a dominant consideration in Bihar society right from the beginning of the twentieth century (see Hetukar Jha, 1985, pp. 116–26).

Bhojpur. Privacy leads to insulation to some extent, and this becomes obvious as the members of a *baraka* family in Mithila stop talking to each other, eating together, and so on, when they have *jhagra* amongst themselves. Interaction ceases as well. The divisive trend virtually dominates the *baraka* people here. But, in Bhojpur, this has not been found to be the modal pattern.

Hierarchy, even at the *baraka* level, is more pronounced in Mithila than in Bhojpur as Mithila has remained over the centuries a prominent seat of brahmanic orthodoxy. Besides, village society in Bhojpur is generally horizontally split between two groups—one of the upper caste cluster and the other of the non-upper caste clusters. The divisive trend in the *baraka* layer in a village in Bhojpur, which is generally dominated either by the upper caste groups or by the non-upper caste groups, cannot, therefore, be expected to be as high as in Mithila where a village is generally vertically divided. Conflict, even at the latent level, would therefore be more prevalent among the *baraka* people of Mithila than among those of Bhojpur. However, once it is manifested, it is frequently fought in the courts of law in both Mithila and Bhojpur.

It has been found to be typical of *baraka* people to approach the *kachehri* for the resolution of their conflicts. In the *kachehri*, generally, heavy expenditure of time and money is involved. Besides, it does not resolve the conflict between the parties. It merely takes a decision on the issues involved. Conflicts in a village are generally of a personalised nature. A decision in the court of law is taken in an impersonal manner. Consequently, conflict between the parties continues even though the issue of conflict is resolved. It is decided in favour of one against the other. Compromise is, thus, simply missing in the *kachehri* style of conflict resolution. Therefore, conflict at the latent level, *i.e.*, jockeying and intriguing against each other, continues to mark relationships among the *baraka* men. It may be mentioned in passing that most of the leaders at the district and state level politics have their roots in the *baraka* layer of villages (Jha, Dayadhar, 1977, p. 60; Roy, Ramashray, 1987, pp. 136–50. They might be carrying the trade of jockeying against one another (characteristic of *baraka* people) to the various levels of political sphere at which they operate. And this trait might be eventually facilitating the growth of rampant factionalism prevailing among them (Roy, Ramashray, 1987, pp. 169–89).

Among the *chhotaka/nanh*, conflict does not remain at the latent level. As soon as there are differences, they become visible.

They exchange abuses and may even assault each other. However, they themselves soon resolve their differences. They depend on informal arbitration by the local *panches* for the resolution of their conflict. They do not go to the *kachehri* as the *kachehri* involves the expenditure of a great deal of time and money. Their life style is quite communal. The members of a *chhotaka/nanh* family generally remain together both at home and at work. This has been found to be the typical pattern in the satellite villages but not in the feeder ones. Since satellite villages are greater in number in both Bhojpur and Mithila, one may suppose that communal living is the modal style prevalent among the *chhotaka/nanh* families.

In the *tolas* of the *chhotaka/nanh* people, the huts are very closely situated. There is very little privacy within the *tola*. Further, as they go out to work, they generally work in groups either as *jans* or as *halwahas*. In the feeder villages, due to the diversity of occupations, it is not always possible for them to work in groups. However, *tola* life in these villages too would be the same as that of the satellite ones. Thus, the communal style marks their living pattern. Therefore, perhaps, they cannot afford to remain in conflict for long. They soon resolve their conflicts so that their communal life might not be disturbed: For this they depend upon the *panchayati* style of conflict resolution. The *panchayat* (not the *gram panchayat* of *panchayati* raj) takes little time to resolve the issue by compromising between the parties involved in conflict. Once there is a compromise between them, there is little scope for the conflict to continue even at the latent level. This helps them to live their life communally.

The difference between the *panchayati* and *kachehri* style of conflict resolution has also been noted by Rudolph and Rudolph. According to them,

> The adversary mode of western procedure not only isolates the 'case' and its litigants from their social context but also is expected to result in a declaration that one side has won and the other lost. Village tribunals, on the other hand, try to compromise differences so that the parties to a case can go home with the appearance at least of harmony and with their dignity intact (1969, p. 258).

The present legal system, an important institution of democratic governance, is based on this 'adversary mode of procedure' that

'isolates the case and its litigants from their social context'. This has not been found to be the typical mode followed by the *chhotaka/nanh* people (who are in an overwhelming majority in the villages) for the resolution of their conflicts. Among the *baraka* sector where the *kachehri* style has been observed to be the typical style of conflict resolution, it tends to perpetuate and promote latent conflict which in the course of time might generate feelings of distrust for each other. Consequently, the situation seems to resemble the one that Banfield (1958, p. 98) describes as the society of amoral familists, in which working for collective good and social development is regarded as fraud. Thus, those who depend upon the *kachehri* style of conflict resolution tend to engage in intriguing and jockeying with each other constantly, which might prove to be detrimental to the cause of common interests. Further, those who do not generally depend upon it constitute a very large section of the people. They may easily tend to resort to non-legal means for the redressal of their grievances against *baraka* men, who would not generally like to sit with them in the *panchayat* for the resolution of their conflicts. In a society like Bhojpur, which has a great propensity towards violence and where people of the *chhotaka/nanh* cluster have been organising themselves for a long time to assert their dignity and unity *vis-a-vis* those of the upper caste groups (Hetukar Jha *et al.*, 1985, p. 24), the *chhotaka/nanh* people might prefer some non-legal course of action (such as violence) against *baraka* men in case of conflict with them as they do not favour *kachehri* style of conflict resolution.[3] Under the circumstances, the legitimacy of the present legal system is open to question. Democracy, in this context, seems to confront the crisis of its legitimation in society.

The mode of operation of the institutions of *mahajani, janouri* and *bataidari* indicates the ethos of control dominating the conduct of *mahajans* and *maliks* in this context. The *chhotaka/nanh* people who are debtors, *jans* and *halwahas* and *bataidars* seem to be generally subjected to the severe control of *baraka* people. However, the tendency of control has been found to be more

[3] In a study of violence in rural Bihar, Binay Kumar Singh analysed the reports published in this context in various newspapers including *Indian Nation*, *Aryavarta*, *Searchlight* and *Janshakti* from 1976 to 1986. During this period, Bhojpur had 99 incidents of violence while in Madhubani there were only 40 incidents (see Binay Kumar Singh, 1988).

pronounced in Mithila than in Bhojpur. In Bhojpur, the *chhotaka/nanh* people (*jans/halwahas*) have been observed to raise their voice in protest against their *maliks*. But they do so only collectively. At the inter-personal level, the *malik's* control on his *jan* is so strong even in Bhojpur that the latter does not dare protest against him. In a group, protest becomes impersonal; at least the responsibility for protest is shared by all those forming the group and, therefore, the risk of victimisation of an individual *jan* by a *malik* is considerably reduced. Besides, the practice of organising against upper caste groups is fairly established among the non-upper caste groups in Bhojpur (Hetukar Jha *et al.*, 1985, pp. 21–22). The *chhotaka/nanh* people belong to the non-upper caste groups and it seems that they are able to protest against their *maliks* as they manage to organise themselves in a group due to the prevalence of this tradition among them. In Mithila, such a practice has not grown due to the long tradition of *brahmanic* hegemony over the non-upper caste groups (*ibid.*, pp. 42–43). So the control exercised by the *baraka* people, in the transaction of their roles of *mahajan* and *malik*, seems to be more severe in Mithila than in Bhojpur. As a consequence, perhaps, the exploitation of *chhotaka/nanh* is also much greater in Mithila than in Bhojpur. However, the patronage extended to them seems to be correlated with the trend of their exploitation. In Mithila, where they have been observed to be more exploited, they are also more patronised. But the extent of patronage does not appear to be in proportion to that of exploitation. Patronage is only occasionally extended while exploitation is almost regular. However, the pattern of accommodation of some *chhotaka/nanh* people in the *baraka* families as their house-servants for generations indicates the institutionalisation of patronage of *baraka* men towards the former in their day-to-day intra-familial interactions. The practice of extending patronage by *baraka* men to *chhotaka/nanh* in the village, both occasionally (in the sphere of *jajmani*, for example) and regularly (in the families of *baraka* men) probably works as a cohesive bond among them. This bond may be supposed to be stronger in Mithila than in Bhojpur. However, the prevalence of the *jajmani* system seems to reinforce this bond at the village level in both the regions under study.

Thus, the primary level structure characterising the everyday life of the village seems to be constituted by the hierarchy of

baraka and *chhotaka/nanh*. The norms of etiquette prevailing among them reflect a pattern that is typically *darbari* in style. However, this style is also valued as a means of securing favour from the superiors. Life among the *chhotaka/nanh* is gregarious or communal in nature. Hierarchy is not so pronounced among them as in the *baraka* layer. Their living and working conditions as well as the mode of conflict resolution also indicate the institutionalisation of their communal living. The objective conditions for the emergence of a sense of solidarity or we-feeling among them that they could assert and exploit to promote their common interests, thus, seem to be a constituent of the primary level structure in the village. However, its emergence depends upon *how* they are organised (formally or informally) at the secondary level structure. And this depends upon the historical trend as well as the external influence, discussed elsewhere, regarding the regions of Bhojpur, Magadh and north Bihar (Hetukar Jha *et al.*, 1985, pp. 20–43). The historical experience of Bhojpur has been observed to be important for the emergence and prevalence of a sense of solidarity among the *chhotaka/nanh* in Bhojpur (*ibid.*, p. 39). In north Bihar, historically, the situation has been different and the sense of we-feeling prevailing among the *chhotaka/nanh* of Bhojpur was found to be missing here (*ibid.*, p. 56). Thus, the *chhotaka/nanh* layer of Bhojpur, though similar in socio-economic context to that of Mithila, seems to differ from the latter by virtue of having a different historical experience. The primary level structure of the village in Bhojpur, therefore, seems to be more vulnerable to change than in Mithila.

The *baraka* layer, on the contrary, is continuously afflicted with latent and manifest conflict, which is greater in Mithila than in Bhojpur. The divisive tendency is higher among the *baraka* people of Mithila than among those of Bhojpur. The preference for privacy and the sense of hierarchy are also more pronounced among the former. The *chhotaka/nanh* are connected with the *baraka* people in both the regions of Bhojpur and Mithila through the institutions of *mahajani*, *bataidari*, *janouri* and *jajmani*. Of these, *mahajani*, *bataidari* and *janouri* became dominant in the village during colonial rule, causing the decline of the village from its status as a primordial secular base of accommodation and integration among its various groups (see Hetukar Jha, 1990). The village still continues to be on the decline. The *baraka* people

pursue their self-interests and are divided amongst themselves. They are guided by the ethos of control, coercion and exploitation in their relationships with the lower class in the context of these three institutions. However, the trend of exploitation and coercion is accompanied by that of patronage though, of course, not to the same extent.

Since the extent of patronage is too limited to pronounce the role of patron among the *baraka* people (even in Mithila), the division of the village people into the categories of patrons (*raja*) and clients (*praja*) does not seem to be appropriate. The term '*raja-praja* system', which implies the above categorisation, therefore does not appear to be adequate for the reality that obtains in the rural areas under study at present. However, the ethos of control which forms the basis of this styem, as contended by Hagen, seems to be dominant among the *baraka* people who tend to exploit and coerce their *bataidars*, *jans* and *halwahas* and also their *chhotaka/nanh* debtors in their own interests.

The village could have disintegrated under the pressure of control and exploitation to which a large section of its population is subjected. But this has not happened so far. Its identity is still intact. The reinforcement of the practice of giving patronage with the prevalence of the *jajmani* system seems to forge a bond of cohesion among the *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* constituting the village. Besides, the dominance of self-interest orientation among the *chhotaka/nanh* in the village, as seen in the context of norms of etiquette, might also force them to retain the old ties of *bataidari* and *janouri* in the absence of better alternatives. This sort of cohesion among the *baraka* and *chhotaka/nanh* would, therefore, tend to work so long as modern occupational avenues are not forthcoming. Probably, the variation of this cohesion, based chiefly on the desperate conditions of the overwhelming majority of the population and legitimised by the tradition of *jajmani* is directly correlated with the variation in the primary level structures of the different kinds of villages enunciated before.

Glossary

Abwab: Illegal cess, imposts and charges levied by *zamindars* during the Mughal and British rule

Apne: Respectful second person pronoun used in Maithili and Bhojpuri

Bahia: Labourer permanently or temporarily attached to a landowner

Banihar: Labourer

Baraka: Upper class people

Batai: Division of crop between the actual cultivator and landowner.

Bataidar: Sharecropper

Bataidari: Practice of working as a sharecropper

Bechiragi: Village where there is no habitation

Begari: Forced labour

Bhaoli: A system of paying produce rent during the *zamindari* period. According to this system, the value of the crop was appraised on the field shortly before the harvest and a share of that value was paid by the cultivator (*raiyat*) to the landlord

Chhotaka/nanh: Lower class people

Chouthai: A system of *batai* according to which the landowner provides capital and the sharecropper gets only one-fourth of the produce after harvest

Chowk: Village square

Darbari: A person displaying his submission to his superior by using highly honorific forms of address and expressing unquestionable loyalty to him

Hat/Hatia: Market, usually held once a week, for a group of villages

Hou/Ho: Second person pronoun used for equals and inferiors

Huzoor: A highly honorific term of address

Jajman: Patron in the system of hereditary relationships between artisans/service caste people and patrons in the village

Jan: Agricultural labourer

Janouri: Practice of working as a *jan*

Jhagra: Conflict

Kachehri: Law court
Kamia: Labourer
Khaduka: Debtor
Khawas: Male house-servant
Kirtan: Religious assembly where devotional songs are sung in a group
Kist: An instalment of revenue or rent due from a *zamindar* or *raiyat*.
Kripa: Favour

Lagani: Practice of earning interest by lending money and/or grain

Mahajan: A *vaishya* shopkeeper or trader. A money lender of any caste is also called a *mahajan* in the village
Mahajani: Money-lending
Mai-baap: A form of address used for a superior signifying his total authority over the person using this expression
Malik: Master. This term is generally used for those who are considered to be of *baraka* (*i.e.*, upper) class in the village
Manibatai: A system of *batai* according to which the actual cultivator has to pay a fixed amount of rent either in kind or cash.
Mankhap: Same as *manibatai*.

Panchayat: An assembly of arbitrators who resolve disputes in the village
Pairavikar: One who looks after the cases of conflict in the law courts for those persons who pay him
Pal/Hari: *Jajmani* system
Pargana: A fiscal district comprising a number of villages
Paunl/Pawani/Pauniya/Pawanipasari: Terms used for those who render services in accordance with the *jajmani* system

Raiyat: Cultivator; a tenant with occupancy rights to his land
Re/Be: Terms of address used for persons inferior in status
Roua: Respectful second person pronoun used in Bhojpuri

Sairat: Tax and/or rent on tanks, lakes and orchards
Sarkar: A highly honorific term of address. This term was also used in the Mughal period for a division of territory roughly equivalent to the district
Suba: Province

Tehai: A system of *batai* according to which the landowner and cultivator equally share the cost of production, but the latter gets only one-third of the produce
Tola: Village hamlet

Zamindar: Landlord with rights guaranteed by the Permanent Settlement of 1793. After *zamindari* abolition, any big landowner is called a *zamindar* in the village.

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